

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 393 546

PS 023 927

AUTHOR Whitebook, Marcy; Sakai, Laura
TITLE The Potential of Mentoring: An Assessment of the
California Early Childhood Mentor Teacher Program.
INSTITUTION National Center for the Early Childhood Work Force,
Washington, DC.
PUB DATE 95
NOTE 77p.
AVAILABLE FROM National Center for the Early Childhood Work Force,
733 Fifteenth Street, N.W., Suite 1037, Washington,
DC 20005-2112 (\$20, plus \$3 shipping and handling;
10% discount for NCECW members).
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)
EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Beginning Teacher Induction; *Beginning Teachers;
Child Caregivers; Day Care; Day Care Centers; Early
Childhood Education; Internship Programs; Laboratory
Schools; Longitudinal Studies; *Mentors; *Practicums;
Practicum Supervision; Professional Development;
Program Evaluation; Teacher Interns
IDENTIFIERS California

ABSTRACT

This report discusses a 2-year evaluation of the California Early Childhood Mentor Teacher Program (CECMTP), in which experienced child care teachers serve as mentors, using their classroom as a practicum environment to train student teachers. The evaluation assessed the extent to which CECMTP goals were met by answering the following three questions: (1) is the CECMTP reaching qualified and experienced teachers and positively influencing their efforts to improve quality in the community; (2) what are the strengths and weaknesses of the CECMTP as assessed by program participants; and (3) is mentoring an effective alternative for a field practicum compared to a traditional lab school experience? Seventy-eight mentors and 129 lab students, mentees, and community teachers employed in child care centers who had never participated in a supervised teaching course were surveyed. Observational data on classroom quality and teacher behavior was collected for the lab students, mentees, and community teachers. Findings indicated that mentor classrooms were rated as better than community classrooms, but not as good as lab sites, and as mentors gain experience mentoring, they become more effective teacher trainers. Recommendations included extending the connection between mentors and post-practica students, and increasing the pool of mentors serving low income children.

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THE POTENTIAL OF MENTORING

An Assessment of the California
Early Childhood Mentor Teacher Program

A Report by The National Center for the Early Childhood Work Force

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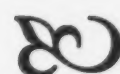
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THE POTENTIAL OF MENTORING



AN ASSESSMENT OF THE
CALIFORNIA EARLY CHILDHOOD
MENTOR TEACHER PROGRAM

prepared by

MARCY WHITEBOOK
& LAURA SAKAI



The National Center for the
Early Childhood Work Force

Spring 1995

THE POTENTIAL OF MENTORING ■ AN ASSESSMENT
OF THE CALIFORNIA EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTOR TEACHER PROGRAM

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Acknowledgements

Special thanks to National Center for the Early Childhood Work Force staff who assisted with this report: to Dan Bellm for editing, to Alice Burton, Claudia Wayne and Rosemarie Vardell for reviewing drafts; to Cathy Davis for revising each draft and designing the final document, and to research assistants Catherine Coughlan, Luz Cardona, Cynthia Dote, Kristin Droege, Ken Elkind, Mary Lois Hare, Greg Henschel, Lynne Hoffman, Mary Ellen Knapp, Regina Mailly, Barbara Ogman, Barbara Riverwomon, Ellen Smith, Anne Solis, and Holly Veldhuis, for collecting the observational data.

In addition, we would like to acknowledge the helpful feedback and assistance we received about this report from the following colleagues: Lucy Berger, Deb Cassidy, Victor Chen, Patty Hnatiuk, Andrea Genser, Deanna Gomby, Eric Hoffman, Carollee Howes, Jennifer Kagiwada, Julie Koppich, Dibsych Machta, Peyton Nattinger, Julie Olsen-Edwards, Deborah Phillips, Gretchen Stahr-Breunig, and Dennis Tierney.

We gratefully acknowledge the mentors, mentees, lab students, community teachers, lab instructors, and college coordinators who gave generously of their time to this evaluation. This evaluation—and the CECMTP itself—would not have been possible without the generous financial support of the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the American Express Philanthropic Program, the ARCO Foundation, the Center for Career Development in Early Care and Education at Wheelock College, the Clorox Company Foundation, the San Francisco Foundation, the Morris Stulsaft Foundation and the California Department of Education, Child Development Division.

Finally, our deepest gratitude to all our colleagues—teachers, providers, researchers, trainers, advocates and funders—around the country who are striving to build a skilled and stable child care work force.

The National Center for the Early Childhood Work Force (NCECW), formerly the Child Care Employee Project, is dedicated to upgrading the quality of child care through improving the wages, working conditions and training of early care and education teachers and providers. We coordinate the National Mentor Alliance, a network of teachers, providers, trainers, advocates and policy makers involved in developing and participating in early care and education mentoring programs. For more information about the Mentoring Alliance, and other National Center for the Early Childhood Work Force research and advocacy efforts, please call or write:

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THE POTENTIAL OF MENTORING ■ AN ASSESSMENT OF THE CALIFORNIA EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTOR TEACHER PROGRAM



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There is growing consensus that the goal of improving child care quality for America's children cannot be realized without addressing the professional development and remuneration needs of their caregivers (Boyer, 1991; National Center for Clinical Infant Programs, 1992; National Commission on Children, 1991; National Governors Association, 1990). Many committed to improving child care services—trainers, practitioners, policy makers, philanthropists and corporate leaders—have been experimenting with potential solutions to the staffing crisis. Particularly promising is the emergence in several states of innovative mentoring programs that promote professional growth, while linking training opportunities and increased pay. This report, the result of a two year evaluation focuses on the California Early Childhood Mentor Teacher Program (CECMTP), the largest early childhood mentoring program in the country.

The California Early Childhood Mentor Teacher Program (CECMTP)

Long recognized as a pioneer in the provision of comprehensive child care services, California nonetheless has been affected by the staffing crisis. In many communities around the state a turnover rate of thirty percent or higher is common among teaching staff (NCECW, 1994). Although California requires center based teachers to have pre-service training, in reality many teaching staff are hired to work having received no (or only minimal) child development training or course work. Novice teachers, many of whom are students, are working in programs with other inexperienced teachers, often without benefit of any supervision or guidance in good teaching practices. No pre-service requirements exist for California family child care providers, and few formal pre-service opportunities to learn from other providers exist once they are on the job. Thus, community colleges and other agencies concerned with improving child care struggle to create positive supervised field learning experiences for students, many of whom are already employed. At the same time they wrestle with how to secure the continued commitment to working directly with children from already trained teachers and providers (Cohen, Sharpe, and Stahr-Breunig, 1993; Morgan, Azer, Costley, Genser, Goodman, Lombardi & McGimsey, 1993).

The California Early Childhood Mentor Teacher Program was designed to support and retain experienced teachers,¹ and in the process, enlist them in training novice caregivers. To address these two objectives, the program selects experienced child care teachers and provides them with advanced training in adult learning and supervision. Having completed the training, these teachers can apply to become Mentors who then earn stipends for using their classroom as an environment or practicum to train student teachers. The mentors supervise the students in classroom settings for college credit, providing opportunity for students to link child development theory to their classroom practice. Mentors also receive ongoing training and support to enhance their own professional development and their efforts to upgrade the quality of services in the community.

Program History

In 1988 the National Center for the Early Childhood Work Force (NCECW, then known as the Child Care Employee Project) and Chabot College in Hayward, California developed the CECMTP. Funds generated by NCECW from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation and United Way were used to create a pilot program at Chabot College. In 1991, eight private funders contributed approximately \$270,000 to expand the program to nine additional community colleges throughout California. In addition to the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the American Express Philanthropic Program, ARCO Foundation, the Center for Career Development in Early Care and Education at Wheelock College, Clorox Company Foundation, Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, the San Francisco Foundation, and the Morris Stulsaf Foundation contributed to this effort.

In 1992, federal Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) funds became available to further expand and support the program. Chabot College contracted with the California Department of Education, Child Development Division (CDD), the state agency designated to oversee CCDBG funds to administer the program for \$669,000. The public and private funds, together support mentor teachers directly with stipends, indirectly with training and professional opportunities, and provide expanded field practicum options at community colleges.

As the program has grown, Chabot College has assumed increasing administrative responsibility, while NCECW has focused its efforts on documentation and dissemination of information about mentoring programs. Beginning in September, 1993, Chabot College assumed full responsibility for administration and expansion of the program, while continuing to collaborate with NCECW on the evaluation and networking. Currently, the CECMTP operates in 25 community colleges across California.

¹ The CECMTP encourages family child care providers as well as center teachers to become mentors. Because the majority of participants are teachers, we use the term "teacher" in this report, unless referring specifically to the one family child care provider in our sample.

STUDY DESIGN

Several developments influenced this assessment of the California Early Childhood Mentor Teacher Program: 1) nationwide interest in mentor teacher programs as a vehicle for addressing the child care staffing crisis; 2) funder interest in the efficacy of this mentor training model compared to other teaching practices; and 3) the rapid expansion of the California and other model mentor programs resulting from the availability of Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Quality Enhancement Funds. The Chabot College/Child Care Employee Project pilot mentor teacher program was in the process of replication to six additional sites throughout the state at the time that the CCDBG funds became available. Because of the rapid nature of its growth, program developers, foundation funders, and policy makers agreed that an evaluation would help to identify strengths and correct weaknesses in the program model.

The goals of the California Early Childhood Mentor Teacher Program (CECMTP) are four-fold:

1. to retain skilled and stable child care teachers through advanced training, professional recognition and financial reward;
2. to increase the opportunities for novice and/or untrained teachers to improve their caregiving skills through participation in a high quality supervised teaching experience;
3. to increase awareness in the community on issues related to quality; and
4. to involve the community college with others to improve standards of quality in the community.

The evaluation was designed to assess the extent to which these goals were met by examining three questions:

1. Is the CECMTP reaching qualified and experienced teachers and providers, and positively influencing their job tenure, professional development and efforts to improve quality in the community?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the CECMTP as assessed by program participants?
3. Is the mentoring process as implemented by the CECMTP an effective alternative for a field practicum compared to a traditional lab school experience?

Our examination focused on two different groups of early care and education teachers. The first group consisted of teachers who had been selected as mentors in their communities. Written survey information was collected from seventy-eight mentors. The second group was comprised of three subsets of child care teachers:

- 1) *lab students*: those participating in a laboratory practicum at their college campuses;
- 2) *mentees*: those participating in a supervised teaching experience with a mentor;
- 3) *community teachers*: those currently employed in child care centers who had never participated in a supervised teaching course.

Observational data on classroom quality and teacher behavior was collected for 129 lab students, mentees and community teachers twice over a six month period. For the first observation, students were observed during their practica; the second observation occurred at their place of employment. Survey data was also collected from students and community teachers.

FINDINGS

Finding 1 8

The CECMTP has succeeded in attracting a pool of highly qualified, veteran teachers to serve as mentors to early childhood education students.

The CECMTP attracts mentor teachers who are:

- highly trained and experienced in early childhood education
- engaged in ongoing professional development
- unusually stable in their jobs and committed to their child care careers
- involved in professional organizations and efforts to upgrade the child care field
- earning relatively high child care salaries and receiving better benefits, although many are struggling economically
- ethnically diverse, although many are challenged to meet the linguistic needs of the children and families in their classrooms

Finding 2 8

Through the CECMTP, mentors improve their self esteem, form a new skills in working with other adults, and re-new their commitment to their profession. Mentors' identify minor suggestions to improve the CECMTP.

Mentors identify the following program features as contributing to their professional development:

- the application and selection process which involves self assessment of their classrooms

- training focused on supervision, adult modeling, and staff relations
- their relationships with college coordinators and other colleagues, especially through the annual Mentor Institute, which provide recognition and support
- the ongoing structure to discuss experiences with other mentors through the monthly meetings
- their increased advocacy skills and involvement in their communities
- the stipend as an acknowledgment of their achievement and as financial support for further education and training

Mentors suggest that the following program areas could be strengthened:

- the monthly mentor meetings, particularly with regard to the quality and consistency of instruction
- screening and preparation of mentees
- the amount of release time received to complete their mentoring responsibilities
- the number of mentees available for placement, particularly in light of the relationship between placements and stipend levels

Finding 3 80

The CECMTP provides training to an ethnically diverse, experienced group of students, many of whom are employed in child care centers. Like their lab student counterparts, mentees report a high level of satisfaction with their practica experience.

Mentees and lab students in our sample are similar in age and educational background, but mentees more often are:

- women of color
- employed in child care
- experienced in working with children
- likely to view child care teaching as a long-term career

Both groups of students rate their placement site, relationships with their supervisors or mentors, and their overall experience as contributing positively to how they design and implement activities for children.

Finding 4

Mentor classroom are rated as high in quality, better than community classrooms, but not as good as lab sites.

Based on the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, the average ratings for mentor and lab classrooms were "good," while the average rating for community classrooms falls in the acceptable, but not good range. Less than 10% of mentor classrooms were rated as "minimally acceptable," compared to 20% of community classrooms.

Finding 5

Student teachers while engaged in their supervised practica--whether in a lab or mentor classroom--rate better on several items of teacher behavior than do community teachers without practica experiences. Lab students, however are rated as more sensitive than mentees.

Lab students and mentees are rated as less harsh and more likely to enhance the emotional health and self concept of children compared to community teachers. On average, lab students are rated as "quite" sensitive, while mentees and community teachers are considered in the "somewhat" sensitive range.

Finding 6

Following their practica, students--whether trained in a lab or mentor classroom--exhibit somewhat more negative teacher behaviors, particularly when working in lower quality classrooms than their training sites.

At the follow-up observation, mentees and lab students were working in lower quality classrooms than they did during their supervised practica. Although still rated as adequate in teacher behaviors, they are more harsh and detached in their interactions with children. However, their level of sensitivity and overall competence is maintained.

Finding 7

As mentors gain experience mentoring, they become more effective teacher trainers.

Mentees working with mentors who had previously mentored students were rated as less harsh during their practicum and less detached at the follow up observation than were mentees working with first time mentors.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Teachers of older children participate in a supervised practica nearly four times as long and undergo more intensive induction to the teaching profession compared to early childhood student teachers. Still, it is common for newly trained K-12 teachers to be ineffective and discouraged during their first years on the job. The challenge of training effective teachers is the subject of debate and experimentation throughout the country. The recently established Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Program (BTSA) in California was developed in response to the high turnover and low levels of competency among recently credentialled K-12 teachers. Recognizing the need for ongoing training, mentoring and assessment during the first several years of a teaching career, BTSA provides funds for communities to support new teachers.

The CECMTP evaluation findings mirror outcomes found among teachers of older children. Early childhood teachers require similar ongoing investments in their training. They also need jobs in better quality programs. Thus, systematic efforts to improve the quality of centers must go hand in hand with an extension of training opportunities. Feedback gathered from this evaluation suggest several avenues for strengthening the CECMTP. These include:



STRENGTHEN TRAINING FOR MENTORS

- regularly evaluate the content of courses and meetings as well as the quality of instruction
- identify weaknesses in the mentor curricula and share strategies among college sites for addressing them
- provide periodic assessment of mentors' skills as teachers of adults and target mentor meetings to enhance mentors' skills.



EXTEND THE CONNECTION BETWEEN MENTORS AND POST-PRACTICA STUDENTS

- establish an ongoing support group for mentees and lab students to reflect upon their teaching experiences upon completion of their practica



INCREASE THE POOL OF MENTORS WHO ARE BI-LINGUAL, FAMILY CHILD CARE PROVIDERS AND TEACHERS SERVING LOW INCOME CHILDREN IN A VARIETY OF SETTINGS

- target recruitment of mentor applicants to a variety of settings in the community and to teachers with diverse language abilities, particularly Asian languages
- engage current mentors in recruitment and support during the application process



RECRUIT MORE AND BETTER-PREPARED STUDENTS TO WORK WITH MENTORS

- involve mentors and mentees in outreach on campuses
- clarify the role of mentors, coordinators and practicum instructors in the placement process



ENSURE SUFFICIENT RELEASE TIME AND STIPEND LEVELS FOR MENTORS

- bring together directors, college coordinators and mentors to explore strategies for leveraging resources
- explore increasing the stipend annually in accordance with changes in the consumer price index



RESEARCH TRAINING OUTCOMES

- continue to document mentors and mentees participating in the CECMTP
- explore how variations in training approaches and job placements can influence teacher effectiveness in the classroom



INCREASE EFFORTS TO UPGRADE CHILD CARE QUALITY

- encourage mentors to draw attention in their communities to the importance of high quality child care and the necessity of greater societal investment in programs and staff

THE POTENTIAL OF MENTORING ■ AN ASSESSMENT OF THE CALIFORNIA EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTOR TEACHER PROGRAM



INTRODUCTION¹

Recent studies of child care services have shown that increasing numbers of young children throughout the country are being cared for in environments of declining quality (Cost, Quality and Outcome Study Team, 1995; Galinsky, Howes, Kontos & Shinn, 1994; Whitebook, Howes & Phillips, 1990). The majority of child care programs available to families are rated as mediocre, particularly for low- and middle-income families for whom subsidies are unavailable (Cost, Quality and Outcome Study Team, 1995; Galinsky, et al., 1994; Whitebook, et al., 1990).

Fortunately, these studies have also identified the components that are necessary for high-quality services. Skilled and stable caregivers, who provide care for manageable numbers of children, have emerged as the key to enhancing early care and education experiences (Whitebook, et al., 1990). Programs which can recruit and retain trained teachers are better able to provide environments in which children thrive. Yet most programs find it difficult to attract adequately prepared staff, and even harder to keep them. High turnover, fueled by low wages, plagues the early childhood field.

The urgency of tackling the linked issues of turnover, training and compensation is now widely agreed upon by the child care profession and beyond. There is growing consensus that the goal of improving child care quality for America's children cannot be realized without addressing the professional development and remuneration needs of their caregivers (Boyer, 1991; National Center for Clinical Infant Programs, 1992; National Commission on Children, 1991; National Governors Association, 1990).

Many who are committed to improving child care services--trainers, practitioners, policy makers, philanthropists and corporate leaders--have been experimenting with potential solutions to the staffing crisis. Mentoring programs, which promote

¹ This section was adapted from Whitebook, Hnatiuk & Bellm, 1994.

professional growth while linking training opportunities with increased pay, have emerged as a particularly promising option. This report, the result of a two-year evaluation, focuses on the California Early Childhood Mentor Teacher Program (CECMTP), currently the largest mentoring program in the country targeted toward early childhood teachers and providers.

MENTORING PROGRAMS

Mentoring programs call upon many players in the community--training institutions, child care centers and family child care homes, and private and government funders--to collaborate in building a career ladder for early childhood teachers and providers. They carry the potential to enhance recruitment and retention in the field, thus improving services for children and families. Mentor programs vary in structure in terms of local regulation, training opportunities and sources of funds. Typically, however, they are committed to three common goals:

- 1 Retaining experienced, skilled teachers and providers in early childhood classrooms and homes by providing mentors with recognition, and often financial incentives, for their contribution of skills;
- 2 Providing opportunities for mentors to develop professionally, particularly with regard to their peer supervisory, leadership and adult education skills; and
- 3 Creating increased opportunities for novice caregivers to benefit from a supervised practicum experience and to gain new knowledge and improve practices in their own classrooms and homes.

Ideally, mentor training programs provide experienced teachers and providers with the adult training skills necessary for success in their current *de facto* role as on-the-job trainers for newly recruited caregivers, who may have minimal backgrounds in child care and child development. For the growing number of teachers and providers who have not received pre-service training, often due to financial need, these programs increase opportunities for a supervised practicum experience. Mentoring programs extend the early childhood education tradition of on-the-job training by providing a practicum for many settings that are often overlooked in the field, such as family child care, infant and school-age care, and programs serving families from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. By creating more options for field practica--which teachers at all levels of the education system acknowledge as the critical experience in learning their trade--professional competence becomes a possibility for a wider range of caregivers. Mentor programs acknowledge the professional growth needs and provide leadership development opportunities for seasoned teachers and providers, and thus keep well trained people working with children and strengthen the voice of practitioners in efforts to upgrade child care services.

The Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), passed by Congress in 1990, allowed states to use funds to upgrade child care training and compensation. This provided the stimulus for publicly-supported mentor programs in California, Minnesota, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and Wisconsin. An additional twenty states are exploring or have recently established mentoring programs using CCDBG and private funds, and Head Start and U.S. Army Child Development Services are in the process of implementing mentoring options throughout their systems. Many of these programs are targeted only toward center-based teachers; a few, such as the Michigan model, focus exclusively on family child care providers. The Army program will target family child care and center-based teachers; the California model began by serving center-based teachers only, but is beginning to involve family child care providers as well.

Chapter One



THE CALIFORNIA EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTOR TEACHER PROGRAM

Long recognized as a pioneer in providing comprehensive child care services, California nonetheless has also been affected by the nationwide child care staffing crisis. In many communities around the state, a turnover rate of thirty percent or higher is common among teaching staff (NCECW, 1994). California requires center-based teachers to have pre-service training, but in reality, many teaching staff at the time of hiring have received little or no child development training or course work. Novice teachers, many of whom are students, are working in programs with other inexperienced teachers, often without benefit of any supervision or guidance in good teaching practices. No pre-service requirements exist for California family child care providers, but many seek counsel from other providers informally once they are on the job. Thus, community colleges and other agencies which are concerned with improving child care have sought to create positive supervised field learning experiences for students, many of whom are already employed. At the same time, they wrestle with how to motivate already-trained teachers and providers to continue their commitment to working directly with children (Cohen, Sharpe, & Stahr Breunig, 1993; Morgan, Azer, Costley, Genser, Goodman, Lombardi, & McGemsey, 1993).

The California Early Childhood Mentor Teacher Program was designed to support and retain experienced teachers,² and in the process, to enlist them in training novice caregivers. To address these two objectives, the program selects experienced child care teachers and provides them with advanced training in adult learning and supervision. Having completed the training, these teachers can apply to become mentors who then earn stipends for using their classroom as an environment or practicum to train student teachers. The mentors supervise the students in classroom settings for college credit, providing opportunities for students to link child development theory with classroom practice. Mentors also receive ongoing training and support to enhance their own professional development and their efforts to upgrade the quality of services in the community.

² The CECMTP encourages family child care providers as well as center teachers to become mentors. Because most participants are teachers, we use the term "teacher" in this report when referring to mentors, unless referring specifically to the one family child care provider included in our sample.

Program History¹

In 1988, the National Center for the Early Childhood Work Force (NCECW, then known as the Child Care Employee Project) and Chabot College in Hayward, California developed the CECMTP. Funds generated by NCECW from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation and United Way were used to create a pilot program at Chabot College. In 1991, eight private funders contributed approximately \$270,000 to expand the program to nine additional community colleges throughout California. These funders were the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the American Express Philanthropic Program, ARCO Foundation, the Center for Career Development in Early Care and Education at Wheelock College, Clorox Company Foundation, Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, the San Francisco Foundation and the Morris Stulsaft Foundation.

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As the program has grown, Chabot College has assumed increasing administrative responsibility, while NCECW has focused its efforts on evaluation, documentation and dissemination of information about mentoring programs. Beginning in September 1993, Chabot College assumed full responsibility for administration and expansion of the program, while continuing to collaborate with NCECW on evaluation, dissemination and networking efforts. Currently, the CECMTP operates in 25 community colleges across California (see map on page nine).

¹ Adapted from documents prepared by Gretchen Stahr Breunig and Peyton Nattinger, Director of CECMTP.

Program Model

Each college site contracts with the CECMTP to implement the program in exchange for a set amount of funding to cover course instruction, selection committee honoraria, and staff time for program coordination. College coordinators identified at each campus meet twice a year with the CECMTP program administration to share information relevant to program operation.

The program is implemented at each participating college site in the following stages.

Implementation Stages

Key Elements

Step 1:

Recruitment of Mentor Candidates

- College identifies center-based teachers and family child care providers who have completed early childhood training at the college level, including a supervised practicum, have two years experience, and are currently working in a center or home.
- Priority is given to teachers and providers serving children who are subsidized in full or in part by the California Department of Education, Child Development Division, followed by those serving other low-income or special needs populations, such as infants and toddlers, multilingual children, and disabled children.

Step 2:

Instruction of Mentor Candidates

- Mentoring course is offered for two semester units to mentor candidates in a format determined by local colleges.
- Course content is geared to helping candidates build adult education skills for work with student teachers and providers.
- Process includes a self-review of candidates' classrooms, using the appropriate Harms-Clifford Rating Scale (ECERS for preschool classrooms; ITERS for infant-toddler classrooms; FDCRS for family child care).

continued

Implementation Stages

Key Elements

Step 3:

Selection of Mentors

- Upon completion of course, candidates apply by submitting: verification of qualifications, personal statement, letters of recommendation and statement from employer stating willingness to participate in program.
- Selection panel representing diversity of early childhood community is convened; members observe candidates' classrooms and meet with candidates to compare assessments; final decision made by selection panel.

Step 4:

Placement of Students (Mentees) with Mentors

- Students are recruited from early childhood education department at the college or the local high school Regional Occupational Program (ROP).
- Instructors of college or ROP practicum make mentor/mentee placements.
- Mentor placement, modeled on other college early childhood education practica, typically includes at least 100 hours with mentor and participation in a seminar.

Step 5:

Ongoing Mentor Supports and Responsibilities

- Monthly mentor meetings to further develop supervision skills and professionalism; completion of six hours professional development activities annually designed by mentor; optional participation in two-day annual Mentor Institute.
- Base stipend of \$500 per year for mentor meetings and professional development activities; additional stipend based on number and hours of student placements; average stipend is \$507, in addition to the base stipend.

Current Sites: 25 Community Colleges



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Chapter Two



STUDY GOALS AND DESIGN

Several developments influenced this assessment of the California Early Childhood Mentor Teacher Program: 1) nationwide interest in mentor teacher programs as a vehicle for addressing the child care staffing crisis; 2) funder interest in the efficacy of this mentor training model, compared to other teaching practica; and 3) the rapid expansion of the California and other model mentor programs resulting from the availability of Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Quality Enhancement Funds. At the time these CCDBG funds became available, the Chabot College/Child Care Employee Project pilot mentor teacher program was already in the process of replication to six additional sites throughout the state. Because of the program's rapid growth, program developers, foundation funders and state policy makers agreed that an evaluation would help to identify strengths and to correct weaknesses in the program model.

The goals of the California Early Childhood Mentor Teacher Program (CECMTP) are four-fold:

1. to retain skilled and stable child care teachers through advanced training, professional recognition and financial reward;
2. to increase the opportunities for novice and/or untrained teachers to improve their caregiving skills through participation in a high-quality supervised teaching experience;
3. to increase awareness in the community on issues related to child care quality; and
4. to link the community college with other partners in improving standards of child care quality in the community.

The evaluation was designed to assess the extent to which these goals were met by examining three questions:

1. Is the CECMTP reaching qualified and experienced teachers and providers, and positively influencing their job tenure and professional development, as well as efforts to improve child care quality in the community?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the CECMTP as assessed by program participants?

3. Is the mentoring process as implemented by the CECMTP an effective field practicum alternative, compared to a traditional lab school experience?

METHODOLOGY

To address the central questions of this evaluation, our examination focused on two different groups of early care and education teachers. The first group consisted of teachers who had been selected as mentors in their communities. The second group was comprised of three subsets of child care teachers:

1. lab students, those participating in a laboratory practicum at their college campus;
2. mentees, those participating in a supervised teaching experience with a mentor;
3. community teachers, those currently employed in child care centers who had never participated in a supervised teaching course.

Mentor Teachers

In the spring of 1994, questionnaires were sent to 100 mentors from 15 college sites across the state participating in the CECMTP. The other ten college sites were in various stages of program start-up and did not yet have mentors working with mentees. Seventy-eight mentors returned the survey, which took approximately thirty minutes to complete. To facilitate participation, mentors received a \$15.00 honorarium from the evaluators upon return of their completed survey to the National Center for the Early Childhood Work Force office. Mentors who failed to return a survey did not differ significantly from those who did with respect to college affiliation.

The questionnaire asked for information on personal background, professional preparation, job tenure, career objectives and personal involvement in efforts to upgrade the early childhood profession and the quality of care in the community. Mentors were also asked to evaluate the students they supervised, and to provide feedback on their role as mentor teachers and their experience in the CECMTP. Specifically, they were asked to identify the strengths and weakness of the CECMTP program in meeting their professional needs and the needs of the child care community.

Lab Students, Mentees and Community Teachers

The second sample included 129 students and teachers. A pre/post test design was utilized to assess the practicum experience for lab and mentee students and changes in teaching practices over time for community teachers who did not engage in a practicum. Time 1 observations were conducted, on average, 1.9 months after lab or mentee students began their supervised practicum.⁴ Time 2 observations were conducted, on average, five months later.⁵ At the Time 1 and Time 2 assessments, teachers were also asked to complete a questionnaire which asked about their background, their placement and/or their job.

Potential lab student and mentee subjects were identified through conversations with mentor teachers, lab school instructors and college coordinators responsible at each site for the CECMTP. We asked for names of students engaged in their first semester of practicum training either in a mentor classroom or in the lab center. Mentees were selected from 12 of the 15 programs providing information about mentor teachers.

College coordinators and community contacts helped to identify a pool of community teachers. We asked for subjects who had received some basic early childhood education training at the college level; thus, they were only differentiated from lab students and mentees with respect to their lack of participation in a supervised field experience. All mentees who were asked to participate in the study agreed to do so. However, the refusal rate among control and lab subjects was greater (see Figure 1).⁶ Of the group that refused to participate in the second phase of data collection, only two lab students had left the field; the other lab, control and mentee subjects continued to work in child care but did not agree to a second observation. All ninety-four of the remaining students and teachers were reached by phone and participated in the second phase of the study (see Figure 1). *The measures used and the plan of analyses are described in Appendix A.*

⁴ However, on average, lab students were observed 2.37 months after the start of their practicum, while mentees were observed 1.79 months after. This was not intentional but due primarily to scheduling problems. Because lab students had more time in the practicum experience at the time of observation, and greater exposure to positive modeling and instruction, we used analysis of covariance to adjust for these differences when comparing mentees and lab students.

⁵ There was a longer time interval between the Time 1 and Time 2 observations for mentees compared with lab and community teachers, largely as a function of scheduling constraints.

⁶ Reasons given by community teachers for refusal were scheduling conflicts, lack of cooperation from directors and/or unwillingness to request permission from directors. Those who agreed to participate as community teachers and those who refused did not differ from one another with respect to educational background. They were evenly dispersed across communities. No information, however, was collected about the work sites of those who refused to participate. Lab students who refused did so because of lack of interest and/or personal reasons.

Figure 1 - Sample description:^{7,8}

Group	Number Recruited	% Refused	Time 1 Observed	Number of Sites	Time 2 Lost	Time 2 Refused	Time 2 Survey Only	Time 2 Survey & Observation
Mentees	70	0%	70	43	10	9	17	34
Lab Students	50	52%	24	6	4	4	8	8
Community Teachers	53	34%	35	26	4	4	1	26
Total	173	50%	129	75	18	17	26	68

Note: Because of the high rate of turnover among child care teaching staff in general, and the relative instability of students as a group, we anticipated that a number of subjects we observed at Time 1 would be unavailable to participate in Time 2. While the changes in our sample were anticipated to some degree, we were nonetheless concerned that differences in the Time 2 sample would pose problems for interpretations of our findings. To explore this possibility, we compared the Time 1 and Time 2 samples, as well as those who constituted the interview cohort at Time 2 and those who provided only survey data at Time 2, with respect to ethnicity, age, education, specialized training, wages and tenure in the field. We found no significant differences along any of these dimensions between the Time 1 and Time 2 participants or between those subjects we observed a second time and those who only completed surveys at Time 2.

⁷ Twenty-six subjects, or 20% of the original sample, however, completed questionnaires but were not observed a second time for a variety of reasons. Seventeen mentees were included in this group. Two (12%) had left the field; the other 15 mentees (88%) remained in the child care field but could not be interviewed because they had moved out of state, were on parental leave or were no longer working in a classroom. Among the eight lab students in this group, two (25%) had left the field; the remainder gave the same reasons as mentees for not participating in a second observation. Among community teachers, all were working in the field, except one who was currently unemployed.

⁸ A characteristic difference between mentee students and traditional lab students is that mentees have a choice of being supervised in a range of centers. Theoretically, mentees can choose between as many placement sites as there are mentors in their community. In contrast, there is no choice related to site for lab students. At their first visit, mentees were seen in as many as 43 different sites, while lab students were observed at only six sites. This lack of variability in the number of sites creates the potential for bias in this sample, especially with respect to measures of classroom environment. Homogeneity of variance tests were therefore performed. Results indicated that the variability in measures of classroom environment scores were not significantly influenced by site variability.

Chapter Three



CALIFORNIA'S MENTOR TEACHERS

Finding One

- The CECMTP attracts highly trained teachers as mentors, most of whom far exceed the educational and experiential requirements for the program.

All mentors participating in the CECMTP had a college background and have received some specialized training in early childhood education, compared to 75% of teaching staff nationally and 67% of California teachers (Whitebook, et al., 1990; Cost, Quality and Outcomes Study Team, 1995).⁹ Three-quarters of the mentors report that they have attained a state certificate in early childhood education. On average, mentors have participated in a supervised practicum of nine hours per week for 20 weeks as part of their training.

Figure 2 - Educational attainment of mentor teachers compared to teachers nationally and in California:

Staff	BA or higher	Some college including those with AA or CDA	High School or Voc. Ed.	AA in ECE or related field	BA in ECE or related field
Mentors 1994	39%	61%	0%	45%	24%
Cost, Quality Study--National preschool teachers 1993	25%	59%	16%	not available	not available
Cost, Quality Study--Calif. preschool teachers 1993	21%	76%	3%	not available	not available

⁹ The *Cost, Quality and Outcomes Study* collected data from 400 centers in 1993, 100 of which were in California. Although more recent surveys of California teaching staff have been conducted, they do not include the comparative data on individual teacher background. Data reported for *Cost, Quality and Outcomes Study* represent full-time teachers.

Finding Two

- **Mentors demonstrate a commitment to their ongoing professional development.**

Many mentors continue to receive training while working with their mentees. Fifteen percent of mentors were in the process of obtaining a formal license, certificate or ECE credential, most commonly the Children's Center permit. Forty-two percent were working toward a degree. Two-thirds were working toward a BA, 18% toward an advanced degree, and 15% toward their AA, most (83%) were working toward an early childhood education degree.

Eighty-five percent of mentors received fifteen hours of continuing early childhood education during the past year, and 64% say they received credit for the training. In addition, 83% of mentors report that they would like to have more training, but cannot afford to take time off from work or to pay training or course fees.

Finding Three

- **CECMTP mentors are unusually experienced, stable in their jobs and committed to their child care careers.**

Annual turnover among most California child care teachers ranges from 20 to 35 percent (NCECW, 1994). Mentors' turnover rate of 10 percent per year more closely reflects the annual seven-percent average rate of departure found in public schools among higher-paid Kindergarten-through-12th-grade teachers (CECMTP 1993-4 Annual Report, Nattinger, 1994, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992).

Figure 3 - Experience and tenure of mentors compared to teachers nationally and in California:¹⁰

Subjects	Mean years at the center	Mean years in the field
CECMTP mentors	7.54	14.81
Cost, Quality Study National preschool teachers	4.3	9.5
Cost, Quality Study Calif. preschool teachers	5.0	10.8

As indicated in Figure 3, mentors are very experienced and tenured early childhood practitioners. Ninety-six percent of mentors consider their work a long-term career as opposed to a short-term job. Eighty-two percent of mentors report improved career opportunities in child care during the past five years, compared to 25% of other teachers (Burton, Whitebook and Sakai, 1995). Only 10% of mentors would consider taking a job outside of early care and education.

Finding Four ■ CECMTP mentors exhibit a high degree of involvement in their profession, and many engage in efforts to upgrade the child care field.

Nationally, fourteen percent of teaching staff are members of a professional organization (Whitebook, et al., 1990). Sixty-eight percent of mentors are involved in at least one professional organization, such as the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), a local NAEYC affiliate group, the Worthy Wage Campaign, the California School-Age Child Care Consortium, and/or a special interest group focused on curriculum, children's health issues, center management, or church-related programs.

Eighty-one percent of mentors are involved in a wide range of efforts to upgrade the child care profession. Some consider their own professional development as part of these efforts, others are working to improve working conditions and wages at their centers, and still others are engaged in efforts to educate people about the importance of their work.

¹⁰ Mentors working in CDD-funded programs (see Finding Five) are more likely to have a BA and specialized Early Childhood Education (ECE) training, while Head Start teachers are more likely to hold an AA degree with specialized ECE training (Chisq (6)=17.37, $p<.01$). Teachers from community programs typically have an AA or BA with specialized ECE training.

There was a significant association between program type (see Finding Five) and tenure at their centers ($F(3,72)=4.22$, $p<.01$). Mentors in CDD-funded programs report working at their centers longer than those in Head Start, community programs (Scheffe $p<.05$), and APS programs (Scheffe $p<.06$). There was a similar association between program type and tenure in current position ($F(3,73)=2.78$, $p<.05$).

- ◆ *As a mentor, I promote quality child care programs. I give workshops and talk to ECE students about mentor teacher programs.*
- ◆ *I have been educating parents about the work we do, and also educating friends and other co-workers to respect our profession. We are not babysitters.*
- ◆ *I'm involved in policy making and revision to upgrade working conditions at the center where I'm employed.*

Finding Five

- **Mentors hold relatively high-paying early childhood teaching jobs, and receive, on average, better benefits than many child care teaching staff. Many mentors, however, continue to struggle economically.**

California mentors work in a variety of child care program types; in our sample they are distributed as follows.

- 35% in programs subsidized in full or part by the Child Development Division, California Department of Education (CDD-funded);
- 14% in Head Start programs;
- 34% in programs representative of the region's diversity, such as those serving infants and toddlers or school-age children (Community);
- 17% in programs willing and able to serve children of low-income families who are subsidized by funds administered by CDD through the Alternative Payment System, a voucher mechanism (APS).¹¹

Mentors currently earn an average of \$12.89 per hour. Because the mentor pool consists of senior and well-educated members of the child care teaching work force, we expected their salaries to be higher than the average \$8.07 for California teachers (Cost, Quality & Outcome Study Team, 1995; NCECW 1994). Furthermore, the California Department of Education, Child Development Division requires that selection priority be given to mentors working in CDD-funded programs, which historically have provided the highest salaries in the early childhood field and account for the highest-paid mentors in our sample (Howes & Whitebook, 1991).

¹¹ Our sample closely approximates the distribution of mentors across program types among active mentors participating in the CECMTP in November 1994: 36%=CDD; 15%=Head Start; 26%=Community; 20%=APS. Additionally, three percent of active mentors are working in programs serving children in their primary language groups, or demonstrate expertise in a particular area of local need.

A closer look at the distribution of wages, however, indicates that mentors' earnings remain modest. Forty-three percent earn less than \$20,000 per year (approximately \$11.42 per hour) for full-time work.¹² Nearly three-quarters (74%) earn under \$25,000 per year, despite their high levels of training and lengthy tenure on the job and in the field. Seventy-one percent of mentors live with at least one other income-contributing adult, yet nearly one third (31%) live in households with incomes below \$30,000. Nearly half of single mentors with children (44%), and at least 10% of married mentors with children, qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). The EITC is a federal tax refund available to low-income families with one child who earn less than \$23,755, and to families with two or more children who earn less than \$25,296.

Approximately one-third of the mentors have been employed at their centers for ten years or longer; their average wage is \$14.64, compared to \$12.22 for mentors who have worked at their current jobs for less than a decade.¹³ As indicated in Figure 4, mentors under fifty earn higher wages if they have more experience, but for those who are 50 or older, greater tenure negatively affects their earnings.¹⁴ Mentors working in CDD-funded programs earn approximately \$2.00 more per hour, and those working in APS-funded programs earn approximately \$2.00 less per hour, than the average mentor overall.¹⁵

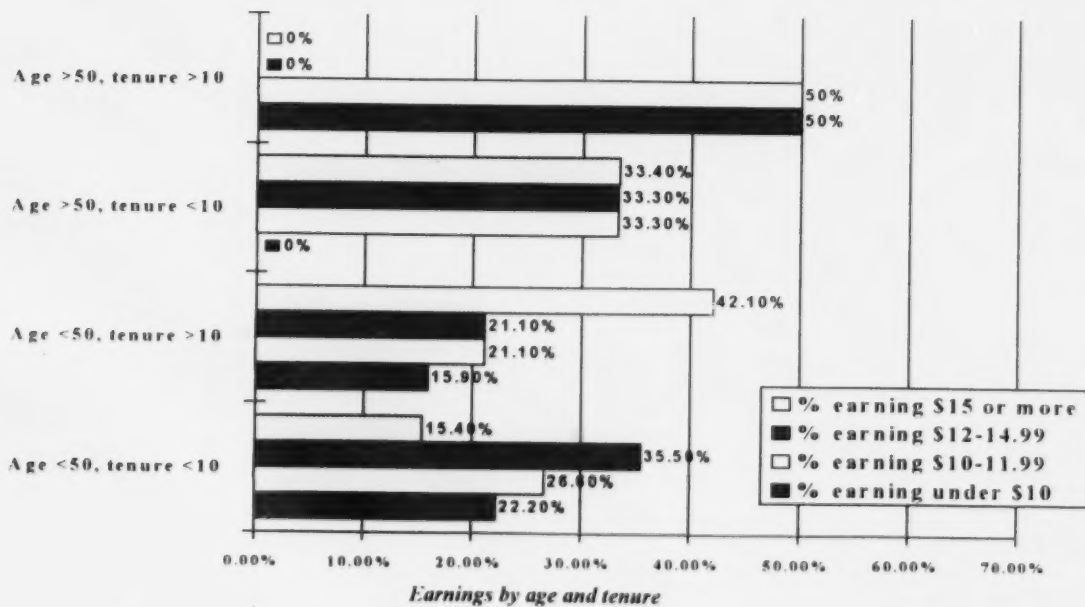
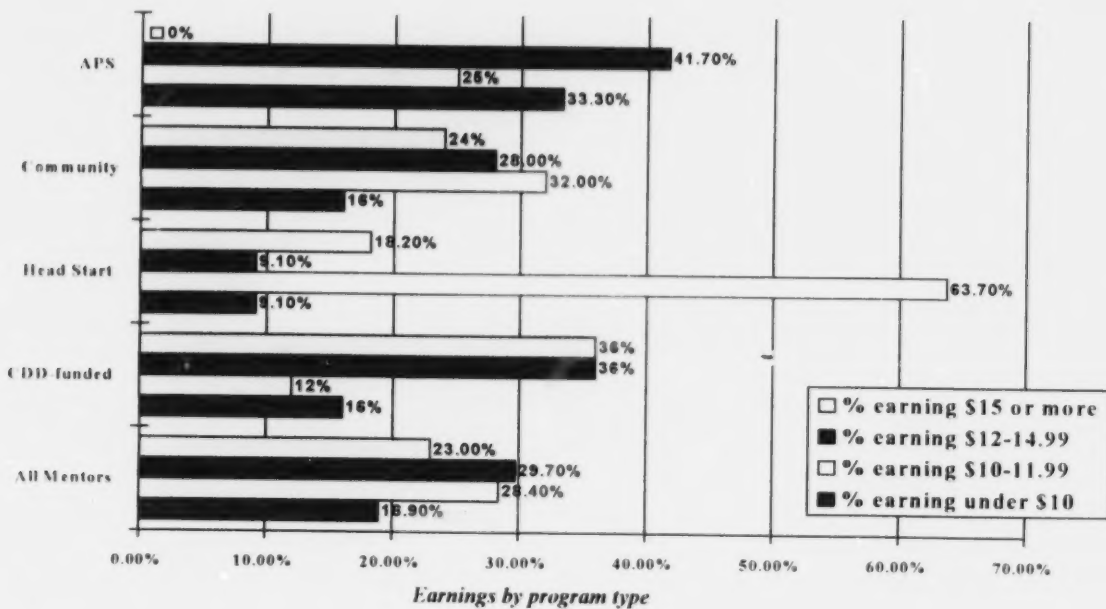
¹² Annual earnings were calculated by multiplying hourly wages by 35 hours per week and 50 weeks per year, a work schedule which is typical for child care teaching staff, including mentors.

¹³ $t(71)=2.01, p<.05$.

¹⁴ $F(1,67)=2.87, p<.05$.

¹⁵ Scheffe $p<.05$.

Figure 4 - Distribution of mentor hourly earnings as reported by mentors by age and place of employment:



On average, mentors work 36 paid hours and four-and-three-quarters unpaid hours per week. Despite their demanding schedules, 18% of mentors in the sample also work an average of ten hours per week in another job, earning approximately \$12.09 per hour. Eighty-five percent of mentors receive health coverage through their jobs, which is more than triple the rate typically available to child care teaching staff (Cost, Quality and Outcome Study Team, 1995). Most of their dependents, however, are only partially covered or not covered at all. Mentors' allotments for holidays and vacations are similar to other California teachers (Cost, Quality and Outcome Study Team, 1995). Only thirty-five percent of mentors work in programs which provide retirement benefits.

Finding Six

- **The CECMTP attracts mentors from many ethnic backgrounds, thus increasing the diversity among early childhood trainers in the state. Many mentors, however, cannot meet the linguistic needs of the children and families in their classrooms.**

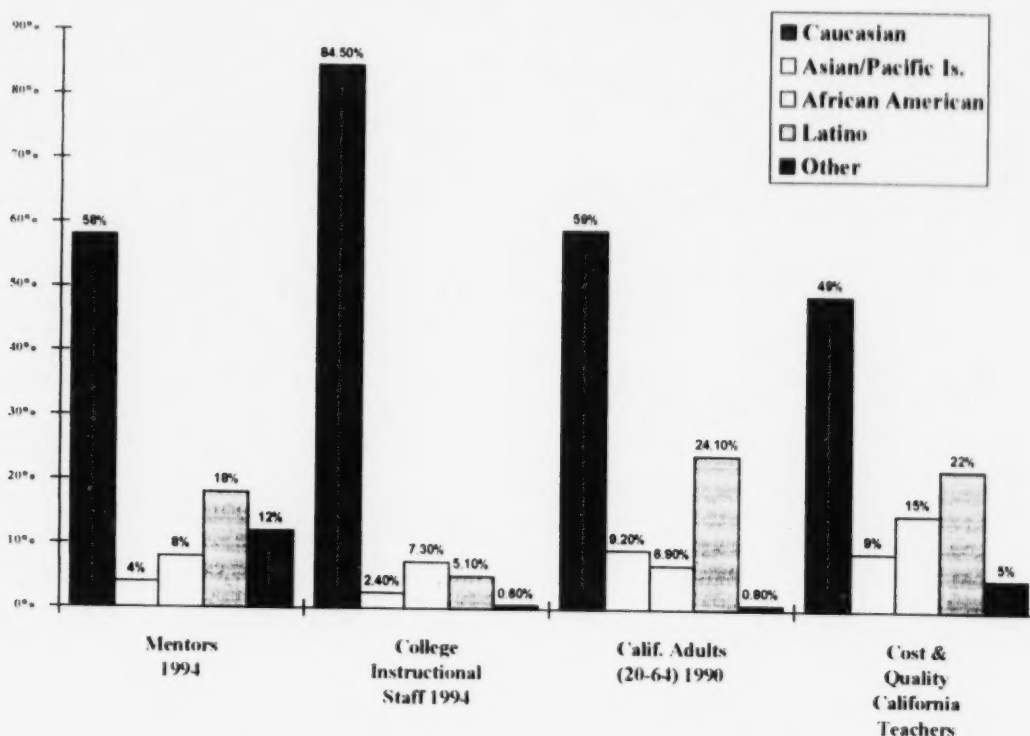
Many minority children in California are in child care programs without even one caregiver who shares their ethnic background (Chang and Sakai, 1993). Child care centers are typically even more hard-pressed to meet the linguistic needs of children whose first language is not English. The lack of diversity in the child care work force stems, in some measure, from a lack of training programs and opportunities for ethnic and language-minority child care providers (Chang & Sakai, 1994). An objective of the Mentor Teacher Program is to diversify the pool of trainers in the child care field in order to expand the pool of workers who can provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services to young children in California.

As indicated in Figure 5, nearly half of the mentors in our sample are members of ethnic minorities, reflecting the diversity of the adult population in California and surpassing that of the community college early childhood instructional staff.¹⁶ Mentors working in Head Start and CDD-funded programs were more likely to be women of color.¹⁷

¹⁶ Ethnic information regarding community college instructional staff is based on a Management Information Systems Spring 1994 survey of college staff by the Chancellor's Office, California Community Colleges. Numbers reported are for faculty teaching child development related courses. Data has not been validated with programs at campuses; data released 3/31/95.

¹⁷ Association between ethnicity and program type (Chisq (3)=17.92 $p<.001$).

Figure 5 - Ethnic diversity of mentors compared to California adult population, early childhood community college instructional staff and California teachers:



Mentors are often concurrently serving children from multiple language groups. Almost half of all mentors report caring for children from at least three language groups. The majority of mentors surveyed speak English to children and parents at their centers. Only thirty-nine percent of our respondents also speak Spanish. Asian languages are spoken by fewer than six percent of mentors.

Mentors are responsible not only for meeting the needs of language-minority children, but also for working with families and staff from a variety of language backgrounds. Approximately 39% of mentors report caring for children whose parents have difficulty communicating with staff because of language differences. In particular, children who speak Asian languages are unlikely to have mentors who can communicate with them or their families in their home language.

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A major goal of this evaluation was to provide a confidential opportunity for mentors to share their perceptions of the program, its effectiveness and its impact on their careers. The next series of findings summarizes mentors' responses to these questions.

Finding Seven ■ Mentors consider the application and selection process for the CECMTP beneficial to their professional development.

The vast majority of mentors found initial contact with the program (92%) and guidance from program staff (96%) easy to arrange. Similarly, mentors view the application process as a positive learning experience (86%) which provided them with an opportunity to reflect upon and improve their work.

- ◆ *It made me take a constructive look at my classroom. It made me more aware of the kind of job I was doing.*
- ◆ *It was like a refresher course in the field of early childhood education.*
- ◆ *It was a chance to consolidate and take stock of my philosophy and professional journey. It was a lot of work, but much was done in the class to prepare for the application.*

Several mentors mention the positive impact the application process had on their self esteem, and on their relationships with colleagues.

- ◆ *It helped me see myself as having something to give.*
- ◆ *It helped me to grow in the supervisory area; understanding people and challenges too.*
- ◆ *It created an interest in improving current conditions. In rating my school and being rated, we felt ready for accreditation and subsequently became accredited.*
- ◆ *It helped me in my relationships with other teachers. I had a lot of help from my boss.*

A minority of mentors (11.5%) feel the application process involved too much work, although they still rate the overall process as positive. These mentors object to the amount of paper work and feel that the time frame was difficult. The availability of support during this process seemed to minimize the stress for some teachers.

- ◆ *The application was long and quite intimidating. If it were not for a very supportive college teacher, the requirements and interview would have scared me off.*

The mentor selection process is designed to foster the CECMTP program goal of improving quality in the community by providing useful feedback to all applicants about how to upgrade their classrooms, regardless of whether they became mentors or not.¹⁸ Eighty-eight percent of mentors in our sample viewed the selection process as a positive learning experience.

- ◆ *The selection process seemed to be based on fair and pertinent criteria and a variety of programs were welcome to apply.*
- ◆ *It enabled me to look at and change my program. It helped me get a clear picture of what was good and what needed improvement.*

Mentors repeatedly mentioned the importance of getting feedback on how they organize and operate their classrooms, appreciating the focused opportunity to evaluate their work. Many found the process personally and professionally validating.

- ◆ *I felt the process reflected the importance and value placed on the mentor.*
- ◆ *It gave me a sense of self worth in my field because I was selected. It helps to know other professionals value your work with children.*

While no mentors rated the selection process as a negative experience, twelve percent shared concerns about the process. A few mentors were uncertain about whether the selection committee's evaluation was focused on how they interacted with children or on how their room was set up. Others felt that selection committee members hurried through the observation, and delayed too long between the initial observation and the meeting to review it.

Finding Eight

- **Mentors rate training content focused on supervising adults, modeling appropriate behaviors, and staff relations as most useful to their mentoring role. They rate their relationship with the college coordinators at their campus and the Mentor Institute as the instructional elements of the program which contribute most to their retention in the early childhood field.**

Because colleges and instructors adapt the mentoring course to reflect community needs and their own instructional styles, we did not ask mentors to evaluate their instructor or their particular course. Rather, we asked them to rate the usefulness of topics

¹⁸ Unfortunately, we do not have data from those who did not become mentors.

covered in the course. Mentors rate a focus on building skills for helping new teachers "learn the ropes" as being extremely useful. All other topics were rated as very to moderately useful, in descending order: child development, working with parents, curriculum planning, advocacy work, program administration, and stress reduction. Mentors report that they gained from the process as well as the content of the class.

- ◆ *Discussing problems about situations at our own work sites with fellow teachers and helping each other come up with solutions was really important.*

Mentors identify the opportunity that the program provides them to meet with other teachers and professionals throughout the state, as well as the special recognition from colleagues and the college faculty, as factors which promote their retention in the field. Because of limited funding, however, participation in an annual Mentor Institute is currently limited to approximately 50 mentors from across the state. Several mentors would like the Institute to be better publicized by coordinators and available to all mentors who want to attend.

Finding Nine

- **Monthly meetings provide mentors with a highly valued structure for reflecting upon their work as teacher educators and professionals; however, they consider the instruction at these meetings to be of variable quality.**

Participation in a monthly meeting is required of mentors, whether or not they are currently working with a mentee. Monthly meetings are intended to provide an ongoing opportunity for mentors to reflect upon their work as teacher educators and professionals, as well as to help them build skills as advocates in their communities for improved early childhood services. Half of the mentors (51%) report that these meetings are always helpful. They appreciate the opportunity to network and problem solve, as well as the recognition which they receive from colleagues. Forty-four percent find them sometimes helpful, and five percent found them not at all helpful. Mentors attribute their dissatisfaction to the quality of the instruction more than to the content of the sessions. Several mentors mention that the meetings have improved over time.

Finding Ten

- **Mentors report that their work with mentees contributes to their own professional growth and enhanced collegial relationships. While positive about their overall experience with mentees, mentors raise concerns about the preparation and the availability of mentees for placements.¹⁹**

Eighty-six percent of mentors consider mentoring a positive learning experience not only for the mentees, but for themselves as well. (Those mentors who do not rate the experience as positive either had not yet worked with a mentee at the time of the survey or had faced unanticipated resistance at their work sites).

- ◆ *My mentees always end up teaching me something new. I'm able to share my knowledge and experience with another teacher and also receive her knowledge and experience.*
- ◆ *Teaching someone to teach makes you re-evaluate and improve your own methods.*

In particular, mentors are enthusiastic about their growing skills in teaching adults.

- ◆ *Being able to give and take with other adults is an achievement.*
- ◆ *I felt I grew more self-confident because I could teach adults as well as children. I also learned from the student teachers.*
- ◆ *My supervision skills improved and this helped me at my job too. Each year I learn more about different styles of training; not all students are the same.*

Several mentors mention unanticipated advantages of participating in the program. Eighty-five percent rate their directors, and 71% their co-workers, as supportive of their mentoring role.

¹⁹ At the time these data were collected, 40% of mentors were currently supervising students. (This percentage is somewhat lower than anticipated, because the survey reached many mentors after their spring quarter had ended, and practicum opportunities are limited during summer months.) Fifty-seven percent of mentors had supervised a student during the previous academic quarter/semester. Fifty-five percent of mentors currently working with mentees and fifty-four percent of those who were assigned a mentee the previous school term reported working with one mentee. Approximately one-third of mentors reported working with two mentees in the current and previous terms. Fewer than 13% of mentors worked with more than two students during the current or previous term.

- ◆ *I have been assigned observation students by the college, due to being a mentor.*
- ◆ *We have a more enthusiastic staff. They now want to continue their degrees. This program gave them an incentive.*

Eighty-seven percent of mentors rate their current or recent match between themselves and their students, and their overall experience with students, as good to excellent. Many, however, raise concerns about the overall process for matching mentors with mentees. Only one-third (35%) rate the process as excellent, nearly one-half (46%) rate it as adequate, and 19% rate it as troublesome. Mentors are concerned about the background of their mentees; 21% feel that students are not as prepared as they expect them to be. Most complaints center around the need for better promotion of the mentor option for practicum each semester, and the preference of mentees for some sites over others. Mentors are looking for support from the college coordinators to recruit more placements.

- ◆ *I feel like I'm simply on my own to recruit student teachers.*
- ◆ *The college should be promoting the "mentor" idea more heavily to its ECE students.*

Finding Eleven

- **Most mentors attribute a positive shift in their self image, an expanded view of their career options and an increase in their advocacy skills to their participation in the CECMTP.**

Many teachers speak of the demoralization and the damage they experience to their own self image from the continual turnover of co-workers (Whitebook, Howes, Friedman & Darrah, 1982; Whitebook and Granger, 1989). The CECMTP program was designed to boost the image and work experience of skilled teachers through recognition of their expertise and through advanced training that is directly related to the challenges of their jobs. Seventy-four percent of mentors report that their self image has improved since becoming a mentor teacher. Half of the mentors surveyed report that becoming a mentor teacher has opened up new career possibilities.

- ◆ *This was the first time I felt that there was a reward for being a good teacher.*
- ◆ *Since I became a mentor teacher I feel that I am a professional person, not a babysitter, and I decided to complete my BS and get my MA.*
- ◆ *The program has influenced me to take more classes and to get my credential in order to become a program director in the future.*

The developers of the CECMTP envisioned it as a vehicle for building a pool of "articulate practitioners" (Takanishi, 1980) who would play a leadership role in advocating for more resources for child care services. In the current climate of under-funded early care and education services in the United States, many of the best-trained teachers are not adequately prepared for the challenges they face on the job--including too little and often damaged equipment and materials, unmanageable adult-child ratios, co-workers with little or no training, high turnover, and lack of familiarity with the cultures and the languages of children and families (Whitebook, 1994). The CECMTP was thus designed to help practitioners incorporate knowledge and skills not only to be competent teachers, but also to challenge and reshape the conditions for effective teaching.

The overwhelming majority of mentors (91%) see it as part of their professional definition to play a critical role in advocating for more resources for higher-quality child care, better staff compensation and increased training resources. Seventy-six percent of mentors report that the initial mentor teacher class helped them become a better child care advocate. Sixty-nine percent cite their relationship with other mentor teachers as critical to their role as spokespersons for the field. More than half report that mentor teacher meetings help them build their skills in educating the community about the importance of their work and its relationship to high-quality options for families.

Finding Twelve ■ Many mentors receive release time from their other job duties to complete their mentoring tasks, but many feel that the release time is insufficient.

Mentors spend an average number of hours per week with mentees ranging from 6-1/3 during the current term to 7-1/4 during the previous term. Additionally, mentors spend an average of 7-1/2 hours per week in other mentor-related responsibilities, such as preparation of materials and feedback for their mentees. Thirty-five percent of mentors receive no release time and 20% receive insufficient time.

Finding Thirteen ■ The stipend plays a critical roles in mentors' personal finances, contributes to their professional recognition, and influences their participation in the CECMTP.

A unique aspect of the CECMTP is its promotion of the link between training and compensation.²⁰ Even among mentors who earn higher than average child care salaries, thirty-one percent report that the stipend is essential to their ability to meet basic living expenses. An additional sixty-three percent consider the stipend helpful but not essential to their livelihood. (Six percent of the mentors had not yet received a stipend and thus did not evaluate it.) While many in this group have not used the stipend to cover basic necessities such as food, clothing and housing, it has enabled them to pursue advanced training and education which would otherwise have been beyond their means.

- ◆ *I use it to buy supplies to add to my teaching skills.*
- ◆ *It helps me to continue to take classes.*
- ◆ *It is essential to my continuing education and my participation at professional conferences.*

The majority (80%) state that the amount of the stipend adequately compensates their time and effort as a mentor, but their commentary reveals that low expectations regarding adequate compensation for child care work may have influenced their perception of the stipend.

- ◆ *I take home under \$6.00 an hour for my work as a mentor. It's important to establish a career ladder and I'm grateful we have this; it's a start for ECE.*
- ◆ *Knowing the child care issues as I do, my expectations of high wages are low; therefore, recognizing us at all is great compensation.*
- ◆ *I am grateful for whatever the amount would have been.*
- ◆ *If I felt that pay equates to time and effort put into a job, then I would not be working in the child development field.*
- ◆ *I'm glad someone cares enough to compensate us.*
- ◆ *Our field is a low-paying one, so I would not expect to be making large sums of money.*

²⁰ The stipend is paid for by the CECMTP and is distributed directly from the CECMTP to the mentor. The mentor's employer is not involved with the stipend in any way; thus, the increased remuneration does not constitute an ongoing salary increase, but rather is based on specific work performed during a given time period.

- ◆ *I feel like all teachers should be paid more, but of course no one would be in the field of ECE if it was just for the money.*

Other comments appear to reflect widespread expectations in the field that early childhood teachers provide a variety of services without compensation.

- ◆ *I might have had a student teacher anyway.*
- ◆ *I wasn't receiving compensation for training teachers anyway.*

Several mentors note that the adequacy of the stipend depends on the ability of the mentee assigned to them and/or the success of the mentee.

- ◆ *Sometimes I put in more time and effort into a student teacher who has no prior knowledge of ECE and no experience.*
- ◆ *It's a lot of work but when you see your mentee do well; it's worth it.*

Many mentors (20%) consider the stipend simply inadequate, considering the amount of time and effort they are expending.

- ◆ *When the stipend is divided by hours contributed it is less than the minimum wage.*
- ◆ *I spend a lot of time and energy writing, thinking, talking with and preparing for my mentees besides my work hours, unpaid.*
- ◆ *I want to say it's enough, but I'm aware that mentor teachers in elementary and high schools get much more. Preschool teachers deserve equal compensation.*
- ◆ *It takes a lot of my time to look over students' lesson plans, to conference with them and to give them their mid-term and final grade.*

Some mentors who feel that the stipend is inadequate have been receiving only the base stipend, because they do not regularly have a mentee assigned to them.

- ◆ *I really need to increase my stipend by acquiring another student. The lower-end stipend for participating in the program is helpful, though.*
- ◆ *We need sufficient student placements for each mentor every quarter; the stipend is the key element to keeping us in this field.*

In addition to more placements, there is concern among mentors about the timeliness of their stipend payments. Forty-two percent report that they are not paid on time, and many comments reflect frustration with the delay between submission of the request for payment and the receipt of their checks. Since the survey was distributed, however, the administration has re-structured the payment procedure and is processing requests for payments within a month. The initial delay stemmed partly from the 1992-93 two-tiered administration involving Chabot College and NCECW, which required state reimbursements prior to the reimbursement of participants. Chabot College now handles all administration and reimburses participants before it receives state reimbursements.

Sixty percent of mentors state that their participation would change if the stipend were eliminated.

- ◆ *I must use my time wisely in order to support my children. If there wasn't a stipend I would need to have a second part-time job.*
- ◆ *The other than financial rewards are great, but so is the time involved.*
- ◆ *For many mentor activities, I need to pay for child care above and beyond my monthly block of time at the center.*
- ◆ *I couldn't afford to spend the amount of time....it wouldn't be fair to me or my family.*
- ◆ *I would need to find an additional way to earn money for my own books and tuition costs.*
- ◆ *Money in ECE is not currently an image-builder; most of us are in ECE for children, not the money, but some stipend is needed. It has to be given for incentive and self-worth.*

Many say they would continue to mentor informally, because they did so prior to the CECMTP. Others say they would continue out of a sense of professional duty, but would be discouraged if the stipend were eliminated.

- ◆ *I am used to working for nothing, so I would continue. Doesn't mean I like it, though.*
- ◆ *As long as my work place and supervisor supported me I would consider continuing being a mentor, but I would be seriously disillusioned that once again my professional career ladder wouldn't be supported financially.*
- ◆ *Although I need the regular income, the growth I feel might compensate.*
- ◆ *I was willing to be a participant before I knew I was to get paid for it. It is a worthwhile cause. It is important to have job training experience for future teachers.*

- ◆ *It would be a lot of work for no reward.*
- ◆ *Attending the meetings, taking the mentor course, the application and on-site visit, etc. and the added responsibility of having a student to supervise would seem less appealing without the stipend. It would be a lot of extra work in an already overworked and underpaid profession without some monetary compensation.*
- ◆ *I would continue to be a mentor but it would be a backward step in the field.*
- ◆ *In our program, we were already supervising practicum students which is more or less equivalent to supervision of mentee students. However, my fellow staff members and I always felt overwhelmed with frustration in the sense that we did not get feedback either in monetary form or commendation for the work we were doing. Being a mentor teacher and getting compensation has made it more exciting and challenging, and at the same time, it has motivated me to update my knowledge in the field of early childhood.*

Chapter Four



A COMPARISON OF MENTOR AND LAB SCHOOL CLASSROOMS AS TRAINING PRACTICA

Dissatisfaction with the level of training among entry-level and experienced teachers and providers is widespread in the early care and education community (Morgan, et al., 1993). Some practitioners have difficulty locating sufficient training resources in their communities, while others bemoan the absence of accessible "hands-on" options providing role models for new practitioners (Cohen, et al., 1993). The CECMTP was designed, in part, to address this gap in professional preparation options for child care teachers and providers. In particular, it was devised as an additional practicum opportunity for students. In a few short years, the CECMTP program has increased practica options considerably for California's early childhood education students throughout the state.²¹ A central question of this evaluation is whether the practica offered by mentor teachers are an effective alternative to the practica offered in college-based centers.

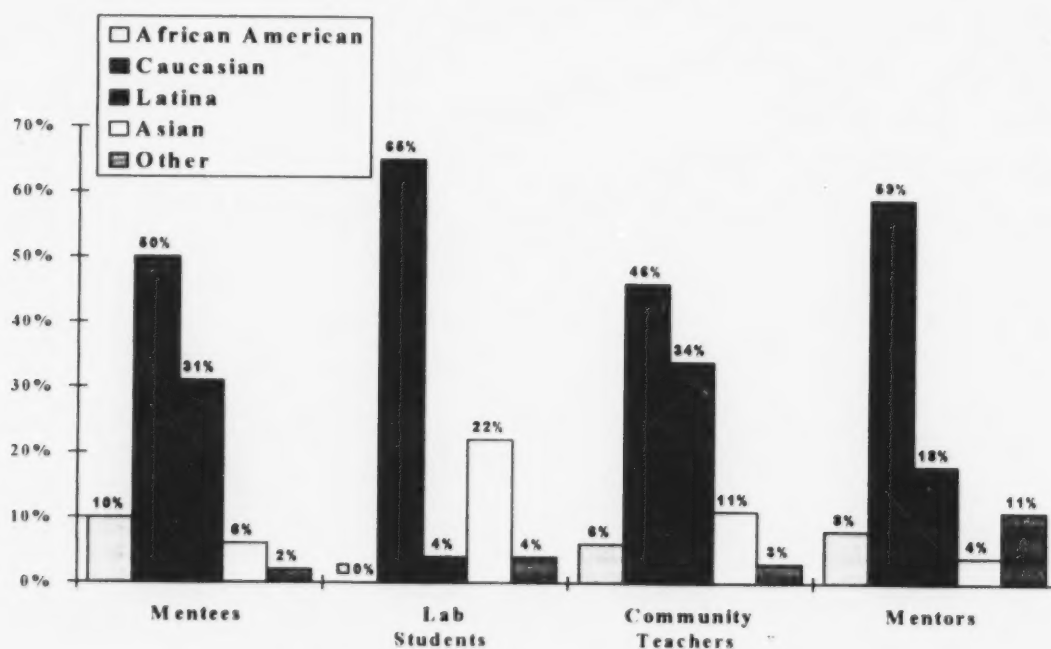
²¹ There are 71 college districts and 106 community college campuses in California. A 1991 survey conducted by the Student Services Unit of the Community College Chancellor's Office reported that 98 campuses in the state provide early childhood education instruction. Most campuses provide a practicum experience on campus, although many students find them inaccessible due to their own job schedules. Eighty-eight of these campuses (or 83%) have child care and development centers which typically provide services to students and/or faculty.

Comprehensive services for families are combined with instruction for students in early childhood education at seventy-five campuses. Seven colleges offer only child care centers with no instruction, and seventeen offer only instruction with no child care services. These campuses may have a field-based practicum for their students (Berger, Community College Chancellor's Office, 1992).

Finding Fourteen ■ The CECMTP attracts an ethnically diverse group of students as mentees, many of whom are already employed and experienced in the field. Lab students and mentees in our sample did not differ in age or educational background, but lab students are less experienced and less diverse than mentees, and are also less likely to be employed in child care programs or to view child care as a long-term career.

Our sample reflects the high degree of ethnic diversity in California. Only one-third of the lab students, however, are members of ethnic minorities, compared to half of mentees and community-based teachers. All of the students and community teachers in our sample are female. The average student is in her early thirties, while the average community teacher in our sample is in her mid-twenties. Among the students and community teachers we observed, mentees are more likely to be married and to have children, but this was due to their greater age.

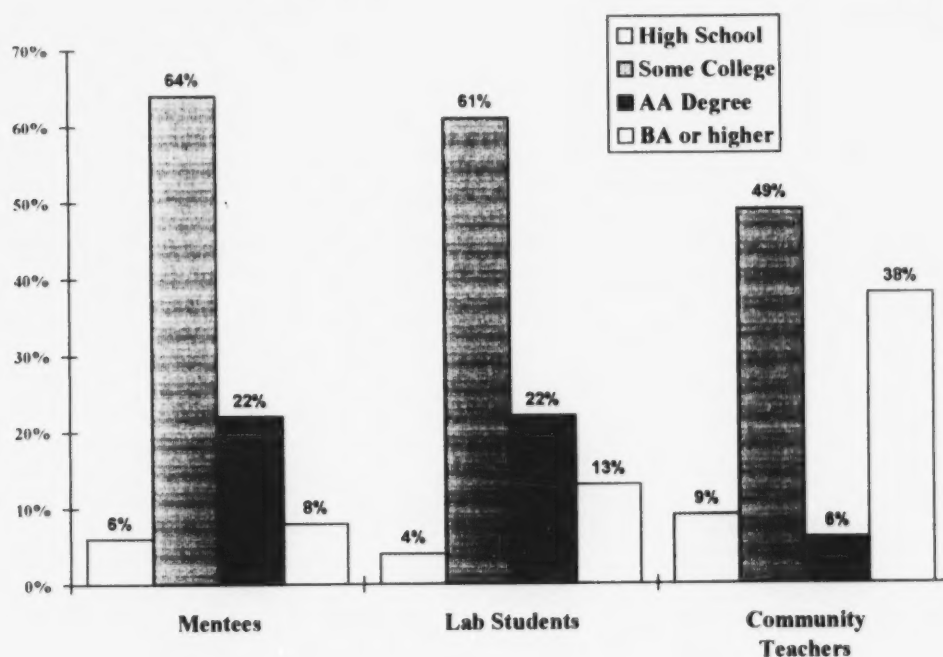
Figure 6 - Ethnic representation among mentees, lab students, community and mentor teachers:



There were no significant differences between lab students and mentees with respect to educational background. Students and community teachers, however, differ with

respect to the highest level of education they have completed. Students are more likely to have completed an AA degree in early childhood education, while community teachers are more likely to have completed their BA degree.²² Students, on average, have completed 23 units of early childhood college course work compared to community teachers' 18 units; however, this difference was not significant.

Figure 7 - Education and specialized early childhood training for mentees, lab students, and community teachers:



Most students were seeking training after they had been in the field for some time, as indicated in Figure 8. Mentees and community teachers had more experience in the field than lab students. These data suggest that the CECMTP is providing training to its targeted population of students who have more experience in the field but who have not yet had a supervised training experience. As indicated in Figure 9, the CECMTP is also reaching more students who are currently employed in the field than are lab programs. A similar proportion of lab students and mentees are employed in centers other than their practica sites, but more mentees are participating in practica at their place of employment.

²² $X^2(6)=17.78, p<.01$.

Figure 8 - Experience in the field for mentees, lab students, community teachers and mentors:

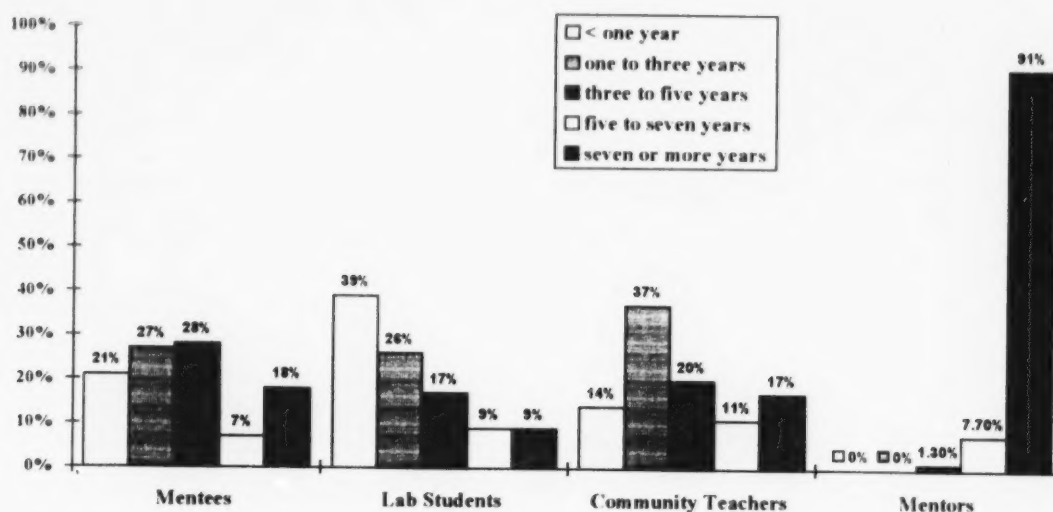


Figure 9 - Employment patterns for mentees and lab students:

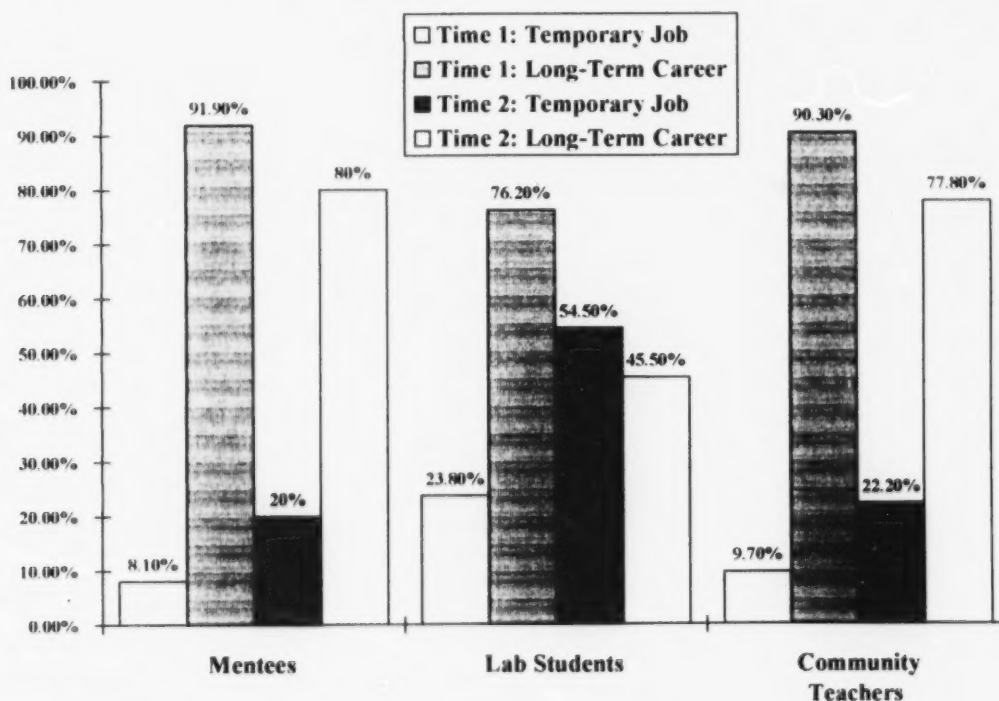
Category	Employed in addition to practica	Employed in same center as student teaching	Employed in site other than center where student teaching
Mentees	57%	19%	38%
Lab Students	45%	8%	33%

Paradoxically, despite the high level of turnover of teaching staff in the field, most consider child care work a long-term career rather than a temporary job (Whitebook, et al., 1990). This was true for students and community teachers surveyed in this evaluation. Although the percentage of participants who view their work as temporary increased for all participants over time, lab students at Time 2 were significantly less likely to consider child

care work as a long-term career than were mentees and community teachers.²³ Consider the comments of two lab students:

- ♦ *I checked "temporary" only because there isn't much in the way of wage increases or benefits in preschool teaching. I wish it could be a career choice. Maybe if my artwork sells then I could do both.*
- ♦ *I am working part-time in child care and part-time in office work. Within the next month, I hope to find another part-time office job because I get paid more for that: \$8.50 per hour versus \$5.25 per hour. I hope to have a career working with families and children someday, but it really isn't an economical choice.*

Figure 10 - Views of child care as a career by mentees, lab students and community teachers at Time 1 and Time 2:



²³ $X^2(2) = 5.78, p = .05$.

Finding Fifteen

- **Lab students and mentees do not differ in their assessment of their practica experiences. Both groups rate their placement site, their relationships with supervisors or mentors and their overall experience as contributing positively to how they design and implement activities for children.**

The colleges represented in this study appear to be doing a good job of promoting their programs and supporting their students in the initial stages of training. Almost all mentees (98%) and all lab students (100%) find it easy to get information about practicum options. Once they have decided to participate in a practicum experience, 98% of lab students and mentees find it easy to get the support they need.

Students spend an average of 8.75 hours per week in their practicum, with mentees averaging 8.28 and lab students averaging 10.47 hours per week. After several weeks in their practicum, the vast majority of lab students (86%) and mentees (93%) feel that the practicum had made a big or very big impact on how they interact with children. Eighty-one percent of mentees and eighty-six percent of lab students report that the practicum had a big or very big impact on how they design and implement activities for children.

Lab students and mentees were asked to rate the centers in which they did their field placements in terms of relations with co-workers, working conditions, day-to-day demands, and supervision. More than three-quarters of all students (77%) rate their centers as good or excellent in these categories. Students' assessments of their placement remain positive even after completion of the practicum. There are no significant differences in placement ratings for either lab students or mentees between our first and follow-up visits.

Students, however, find considerable differences between their practica sites and their places of employment. Lab students and mentees who held other child care jobs in addition to their placement rate their practicum settings significantly higher than their current job setting with regard to working conditions, staff and supervisory relations, and day-to-day demands, as indicated in Figure 11 below.²⁴

²⁴ $F(1,29)=15.60, p<.001$.

Figure 11 - Student satisfaction rating of practicum site and job site:

Students	Practicum Rating	Job Site Rating
Mentees	4.49	3.82
Lab Students	4.33	3.69
Total	4.44	3.79

Note: 1-5 scale: 1 = very poor; 5 = excellent

During our first visit to classrooms, 98% of students reported being satisfied or very satisfied with their field training. When we asked students to rate their practicum experience six months later, 93% continued to view their practicum as highly satisfactory. There were no significant differences between lab students and mentees in their overall assessment of the practicum. We asked students to rate their supervisors' skills on a ten-point scale (10 = excellent). Supervisors were rated very highly by their students (see Figure 12). There were no differences between mentors and lab instructors as perceived by students. The match between students and supervisors, and the practicum class, were also rated as very high by both groups of students. When asked whether supervisors had a clear understanding of their role in the mentoring process, 94% of lab students and 74 % of mentees answered yes; another 20% of mentees rated their mentors as "relatively clear." Very few mentees (6%) or lab students (5%) rated their supervisors as unclear about their role in the process.

Figure 12 - Students' ratings of practicum classes, supervisor skills, and their match with a supervisor:

Students	Classes	Supervisor's Skills	Match with Supervisor
Mentees	8.43	9.20	9.06
Lab	8.81	9.25	8.60
Total	8.52	9.21	8.95

Note: Scale 1-10: 1 = very poor; 10 = excellent

Another indication of student satisfaction with their placement is the extent to which students have maintained a relationship with their supervisors. Mentees (63%) and lab students (75%) report that they have an ongoing relationship with their mentor teacher or lab instructor. Ninety-two percent of mentees and 100% of lab students think that their placement will help with their child care careers. Over half of respondents in each student group feel it will improve their job opportunities and provide them with contacts in the field. Several mentioned the emotional support they received as assisting them in their careers, and about one-third of mentees and one-fifth of lab students feel the practicum will help them at their current jobs. Several students commented on how the practicum helps them develop a realistic idea about child care work:

- ◆ *It gave me a very good idea of what preschool teaching involves.*
- ◆ *It's helped me to better understand and work with children.*
- ◆ *It provided realistic approaches to curriculum, keeping it simple and practical.*
- ◆ *Because I had a one-to-one resource, it allowed opportunities to learn the nuances of teaching young children beyond the theories.*

Finally, all the mentees and lab students who responded to the Time 2 questionnaire say they would recommend their practicum program to others who are interested in the child care field.

Finding Sixteen ■ Mentees and lab students are receiving training in classrooms rated better in quality than community classrooms; lab classrooms, however, are rated somewhat better than mentor classrooms.

We were also interested in the difference in classroom quality between student placement sites and other community programs, as well as between lab centers and mentor classrooms. If the CECMTP were operating as intended, we expected that the mentor classrooms in which mentees were training would be judged higher in quality than the community control classrooms. We also assumed that the lab schools would be judged higher in quality than either group, because they were established explicitly to provide training, have more highly educated instructors, and often have greater economic resources.

As indicated in Figure 13, the results were as expected. Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) scores were higher for lab student classrooms when compared to both mentees' and control subject classrooms, with one exception: there were no differences in ratings among lab classrooms and mentee classrooms in CDD-funded programs.²⁵ Mentee classrooms were also rated higher than community control classrooms. These findings suggest that the average student was being trained in a program rated as good in quality; while not all the mentees were in centers with as high ratings as those used by lab students, most were in centers judged to be good or sufficiently adequate. Fewer than 10% were in centers judged to be minimally adequate, compared to twice as many community teacher classrooms, as indicated in Figure 13.

California has established two standards of care. Title 22 of the State Administrative Code governs private child care centers and requires less strict ratios than Title V, which governs publicly-funded programs.²⁶ There was a marginally significant difference between setting type: 100% of lab, 89% of mentee and 80% of control classrooms met the more vigorous Title V ratios at Time 1. These findings about ratio mirror the ECERS results, confirming our assessment that subjects were found in relatively high-quality classrooms, with lab settings somewhat higher in quality than mentor classrooms, and both student settings of higher quality than overall community classrooms.

²⁵ $F(3,121)=7.51, p<.001$.

²⁶ Title V ratios: infant/toddler 0-3 mix = 1:4, 0-2 mix = 1:3; preschool 3-6 mix = 1:8; school age 6-14 mix = 1:14. Title 22 ratios: 0-2 = 1:4; 2-6 = 1:12; 6-14 = 1:15.

Figure 13 - Distribution of ECERS scores of mentee, lab and community classrooms at Time 1 and Time 2, and compared to national data:²⁷

Category	Scored 6 or better	Scored 5 or better, but less than 6	Scored 4 or better, but less than 5	Scored 3 or better, but less than 4	Scored below 3	Median ECERS Time 1
Mentees, Time 1	8.6%	40.0%	42.8%	8.6%	0%	5.03
Mentees, Time 2	2.9%	14.5%	55.9%	20.5%	6%	4.36
Lab Students, Time 1	21.0%	58.0%	21.0%	0%	0%	5.56
Lab Students, Time 2	12.5%	25.0%	25.0%	25.0%	12.5%	4.34
Community teachers, Time 1	0%	34.3%	45.7%	17.1%	2.9%	4.57
Community Teachers, Time 2	7.7%	19.2%	53.9%	15.4%	3.8%	4.65
Cost, Quality Study, Preschool Centers	3.7%	20.2%	35.4%	30.7%	10.0%	4.22

Note: Individual items are rated from a low of 1 to a high of 7. A rating of 3 on these scales indicates "minimally acceptable" quality, while a 5 indicates "good" quality.

²⁷ We have chosen to compare our sample to preschool centers in the Cost and Quality Study because the majority of our classrooms (80%) were comprised primarily of preschoolers. The Cost and Quality Study scores reported here represent an average for 400 centers in four states.

Finding Seventeen ■ During the course of their field practica, student teachers--whether in a lab or mentor classroom--rate better on several items of teacher behavior than do community teachers. Lab students, however, are rated as more sensitive than mentees.

During our first visit with students and teachers, as indicated in Figure 14, lab students were rated the most sensitive, followed by mentor students and community teachers.²⁸ An exception to this pattern was that mentees in CDD-funded programs were rated as sensitive as lab students.²⁹ Lab students were rated as quite sensitive, while mentees and community teachers were in the "somewhat" sensitive range. Overall, neither student nor community teacher interactions were harsh or detached. However, we did find group differences for harshness. Community teachers were rated as more harsh than both mentor students and lab students.³⁰ There were no significant group differences for detachment.

Figure 14 - Teacher-child interaction as measured by the Arnett Scale for mentees, lab students and community teachers at Time 1:

Category	Sensitivity	Harshness	Detachment
Mentees	2.83	1.38	1.56
Lab Students	3.28	1.27	1.26
Community teachers	2.87	1.50	1.54

Note: Individual items are rated from a low of 1 to a high of 4. For sensitivity, the higher score indicates the more positive behavior, whereas for harshness and detachment, lower scores are more desirable.

Figure 15 presents the mean percentages of items performed by teachers for each of the six teacher competency areas of the Early Childhood Teacher Observation List. Mentees and lab students were more likely to enhance the emotional health and self concept

²⁸ Sensitivity: $F(2,126)=6.80$, $p<.01$; Scheffe $p<.05$.

²⁹ $F(3,121)=4.22$, $p<.01$.

³⁰ Harshness: $F(2,126)=4.84$, $p<.01$; Scheffe $p<.05$.

of children than were non-practicum teachers.³¹ Overall, however, lab students were rated as more competent than mentees and community teachers.³²

Figure 15 - Percent of competency skills as measured by the Early Childhood Teacher Observation Checklist performed by mentees, lab students and community teachers:

Category	Cognitive	Management	Physical	Emotional	Social	Total
Mentees	66%	86%	71%	82%	59%	75%
Lab Students	78%	91%	78%	89%	67%	82%
Community Teachers	66%	89%	73%	74%	63%	75%

Because of the demonstrated relationship between measures of classroom environment and teacher behaviors (Whitebook, et al. 1990; Cost, Quality and Child Outcomes Study Team, 1995), we were interested in the extent to which differences in measures of classroom environment accounted for differences among students' and teachers' ability to be sensitive to children in their care. Teachers in better-quality classrooms were more likely to be rated as more sensitive, less harsh and less detached. Teachers in better-quality classrooms were also more likely to act in ways consistent with enhancing the development of children, as well as to display better classroom managerial skills.³³

³¹ Emotional: $F(2,126)=6.08$, $p<.05$; Scheffe $p<.05$.

³² Differences between mentees and lab students on overall competency might be accounted for by the greater length of time that lab students had been engaged in their practicum compared to mentees. There was a small but significant correlation between "time" and total competency ($r=.23$, $p<.05$). Controlling for length of time in practicum, lab students were still rated as better in overall competency than mentees ($p<.05$). Variability between mentees and lab students in age, education, and length of time in the field did not account for differences between the two groups. Although length of time in the field did not test as significant, many teacher trainers speak of the greater malleability of student teachers who have less experience and therefore fewer "bad" habits to address in training. Total competency: $F(2,126)=2.94$, $p=.05$; Scheffe $p<.05$.

³³ Teachers in better-quality classrooms were more likely to be rated as more sensitive ($r=.36$, $p<.01$), less harsh ($r=.22$, $p<.05$) and less detached ($r=.32$, $p<.01$). Teachers in better-quality classrooms were also more likely to act in ways consistent with enhancing the development of children (cognitive development ($r=.30$, $p<.01$); physical development ($r=.18$, $p<.05$); emotional development ($r=.33$, $p<.01$); overall competency ($r=.33$, $p<.01$), as well as to display better classroom managerial skills ($r=.30$, $p<.01$).

We also were interested in whether measures of the classroom environment accounted for differences between students and teachers with regard to teacher behaviors. With respect to harshness, we found that non-practicum teachers were rated as more harsh in part because of their lower-quality classroom environment. The differences between lab students and mentees with respect to sensitivity, however, are not explained simply by measures of classroom environment. Mentees are not randomly selected from the pool of practicum students, but are referred to mentors by the practicum instructor. We therefore examined the data from numerous perspectives to rule out various other explanations for differences between mentees and lab students. Levels of formal education, ECE training, the presence of children in the home, whether or not students held second jobs, tenure in the field, ethnicity or age did not account for the differences. The length of practicum experience at the time of the initial observation accounted for a very small portion of the difference between lab students and mentees on one measure of quality.³⁴ These findings suggest that there may be some aspect of training or selection of people into these groups in the lab setting that enhances sensitivity.

Finding Eighteen ■ During the follow-up observations, mentees and lab students were working in lower-quality classrooms than those in which they did their field practica. At Time 2, both mentees and lab students were rated as more harsh and detached than they were during the initial observation. There was little change, however, in their level of sensitivity and overall competence.

Approximately six months after our initial visit, we returned to observe those community teachers who were still working in their original setting; we also observed former mentees and lab students who were working in an early childhood classroom. In contrast to our first visit, there were no significant differences in the scores for mentees, lab students or community teachers' classrooms as indicated in Figure 13. We did find, however, that the classroom environment had changed, especially for mentees and lab students.

Mentees and lab students were working in lower-quality centers than those in which they did their practica, and were encountering the generally lower level of quality that characterizes many programs in the community.³⁵ Over one-fourth of mentees, and over one-third of lab students, are working in classrooms rated as minimally adequate or worse on the ECERS. Whereas nearly half of the mentees were in classrooms rated as good or better during their practicum, at Time 2 fewer than one-fifth were in high-quality classrooms. The change was even more dramatic for lab students. During their training, over three-quarters were in centers rated as good or better; at our second visit, approximately one-third were in classrooms rated as good or better. Those who were trained in CDD-funded programs which received ECERS ratings comparable to lab sites at Time 1 were assessed as somewhat

³⁴ r time, total competency=.23, $p<.05$.

³⁵ $F(1.65)=11.98$, $p<.01$.

harsher at Time 2 than other mentees, perhaps a reflection of the change in their environment.³⁶ We also observed ratios during our second visit at Time 2. Eighty-four percent of classrooms met Title 22 ratio requirements, while only 69% met those required by Title V.

Although subjects in all categories received adequate overall ratings with respect to sensitivity, harshness and detachment, all were more harsh and more detached at the follow-up observations.³⁷ Sensitivity, however, did not change significantly over time, nor did teacher competency, as measured by the Early Childhood Teacher Observation Checklist.

Figure 16 - Comparison of teacher behavior as measured by the Arnett Scale for mentees, lab students and community teachers at Time 1 and Time 2:

Category	Harshness Time 1	Harshness Time 2	Detachment Time 1	Detachment Time 2
Mentees	1.41	1.65	1.52	1.69
Lab Students	1.32	1.66	1.22	1.44
Community Teachers	1.47	1.61	1.54	1.66

Given the established relationship between measures of classroom environment and teacher behavior, and lower classroom scores at Time 2, we would expect teachers' behavior to be affected. Many of the former students found themselves in classrooms with worse ratios and lower-quality environments than they encountered during training. Students who had been in classrooms that met Title V ratios at Time 1, but who were in classrooms that did not meet Title V ratios at Time 2, demonstrated a significant increase in harshness and a marginally significant increase in detachment when interacting with children.³⁸ These changes may reflect increased difficulty in engaging children, and/or the necessity to exert more control or react more tensely when managing classroom interactions due to worse ratios and other classroom supports. Even if a teacher is well trained, her knowledge and

³⁶ $F(3,121)=1.96$, $p=.123$; Scheffe $p<.05$.

³⁷ Harshness: $F(1,65)=11.98$, $p<.001$. Detachment: $F(1,65)=4.61$, $p<.05$.

³⁸ Harshness: $F(1,51)=5.41$, $p<.05$. Detachment: $F(1,51)=3.30$, $p=.07$.

skill cannot necessarily counteract the established practices and culture of interaction at a given center, particularly if the teacher is relatively inexperienced.

The constancy of teacher sensitivity and competence scores despite changes in classroom environment suggest that certain elements of teacher-child interaction were less susceptible to changes in the work environment. Teachers who demonstrated sensitive adult-child interactions in a high-quality environment apparently were able to maintain some of those growth-enhancing behaviors when faced with a less appropriate environment.

Finding Nineteen ■ Mentees placed with mentors who have previously mentored students demonstrate some more positive teacher behaviors.

Sixty-one percent of mentees in our sample were placed with mentors who had previously mentored at least one student. Mentees placed with mentors who had previously supervised another student were less harsh than students placed with first-time mentors.³⁹ Mentee experience interacted positively with mentor experience. During their placement, mentees with three or more years of experience working with experienced mentors were less detached than other students with less experience.⁴⁰ Experienced mentees working with inexperienced mentors were more likely to enhance children's emotional development than less experienced students placed with new mentors.⁴¹ We found a similar pattern of results at the follow-up visit; students of experienced mentors were less detached compared to students of inexperienced mentors.⁴²

³⁹ $F(1,64)=3.65$, $p=.06$; Scheffe $p<.05$.

⁴⁰ $F(1,64)=4.40$, $p<.05$.

⁴¹ Scheffe $p<.05$.

⁴² $F(1,29)=8.25$, $p<.01$; Scheffe $p<.05$.

Chapter Five



CONCLUSION

Discussion

In only three years, the CECMTP has expanded from its initial Chabot College site to 24 campuses across the state. Considering its rapid expansion, the high degree of satisfaction and support among participants is remarkable. Administratively, the CECMTP has developed an effective, efficient model that has been easily replicated in diverse communities. The CECMTP also recruits ethnically diverse, experienced, educated and highly motivated teachers to train early childhood education students. As a group, these mentors share an abiding commitment to providing good services for children by participating in continuing education opportunities, advocating for better policies and helping others to learn the essential skills involved in caring for young children.

But several identified differences between lab and mentor classrooms as training environments, as well as their varying impact on students, point to several ways in which the CECMTP could be strengthened. With respect to the comparison between lab and mentor classrooms, we anticipated that mentor classrooms, though good, would not be rated as highly as fully-functioning training institutions on campus. It is more troubling that even though mentees demonstrate more positive teacher behaviors than community teachers in several respects, most are rated as less sensitive than lab students and are somewhat weaker on measures of teacher competence. Our analyses suggest that differences in the training experience may account for some of the variability in student behaviors. The difference may lie in the preparation of mentors, or in the relative inexperience of mentors as adult trainers compared to lab instructors. The fact that mentees placed with more experienced mentors exhibit more positive and lasting effective teaching behaviors suggest that as mentors gain experience as trainers, the differences between lab and mentor practica will diminish. Nonetheless, mentors need ongoing support in order to refine their training strategies, particularly given that mentees are more likely than lab students to remain in the field and to see child care as a long-term career.

The data gathered from the second set of observations focus less on a comparison of training outcomes between the mentor and lab practica than on the more general issue of training outcomes.⁴³ Many studies (Cost, Quality and Child Outcomes Study Team, 1995; Whitebook, et al., 1990) link higher-quality services to the presence of better-

⁴³ These findings about training effectiveness must be viewed as exploratory, both because we have limited information about training outcomes and because of the small size of our sample.

trained and educated staff who are well-compensated and working with a manageable number of children. Our findings also suggest that the presence of trained teachers is necessary but not sufficient for high-quality care. They indicate that the quality of the program exerts a powerful impact on teacher behavior. Whether they came from lab centers or mentor classrooms, students' behaviors were negatively affected when they secured employment in lower-quality center environments. While they were able to maintain their sensitivity levels and certain teacher competencies, their interactions with children tended to become more harsh and detached. Trained teachers, therefore, particularly in the early phase of their careers, cannot necessarily overcome conditions which work against best teaching practices.

We cannot rule out the possibility, of course, that the timing of our visit had a large impact on these findings.⁴⁴ Much of the teacher training literature (Katz, 1972; California New Teacher Project, 1992) suggests that the first six to twelve months following a supervised teaching experience are a period of great challenge for most teachers. They are trying to reconcile and integrate what they have learned with the realities of their current classroom experience. During this so-called "survival" stage, many teachers find themselves floundering and disheartened. Some teacher training institutions have instituted "mentoring" relationships and other support projects for new teachers, recognizing that their need for support, instruction and assessment extends for several years (Brooks, 1987; Bartell & Ownby, 1994; Huling-Austin, 1989).

Some might argue from these data that investments in training do not pay off, since students do not maintain the same level of functioning they achieved during their practicum experience. But evidence from teachers of older children, who participate in a practica nearly four times as long and undergo a more intensive induction to their profession, suggest that the issues identified in this study are common to teacher education. Indeed, the challenge of training effective teachers of children across the age span is the subject of debate and experimentation throughout the country (Brooks, 1987; Dubea, 1990; Huling-Austin, 1989). In California, widespread concern about the competence of newly credentialed teachers, as well as their high rates of turnover, led to the establishment of the California New Teacher Project in 1991. Its success, in turn, spawned the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Program (BTSA) in 1993, which funds projects with state dollars in over thirty communities to assist novice teachers in K-12 schools. BTSA is predicated on the findings of the California New Teacher Project: when new teachers receive intensive support, continued training and informative assessment in their first professional years, they provide better instruction to children and are more likely to stay on the job (Bartell & Ownby, 1994; Blackburn, 1977; Hegler & Dudley, 1986).

⁴⁴ We regretted having to conduct the observations so soon after the practica, but were compelled to do so for two major reasons. First, start-up at several college sites took longer than expected and the evaluation had already extended well beyond its original time frame. Second, because of the high rates of turnover in the field and our relatively small sample, we worried that further delays would reduce our sample at Time 2 beyond usefulness.

The California Early Childhood Mentor Teacher Program therefore mirrors outcomes found among teachers of older children, and points toward the need for investments in the early childhood work force similar to those being made for K-12 teachers. Newly trained students need ongoing mentoring and training beyond an abbreviated student teaching practicum. They also need jobs in better-quality programs. Systematic efforts to improve the quality of centers, for example through compensation initiatives or accreditation projects, should therefore go hand in hand with an extension of training opportunities (Bellm, 1994).



Recommendations

Feedback gathered from this evaluation suggests some avenues for strengthening the CECMTP. Some of the recommendations that follow are directed toward the program administration at Chabot College; their implementation, however, depends heavily on the engagement of individual college sites which the CECMTP administration cannot entirely guarantee. Others are directed to the research, philanthropic and policy communities which share a commitment to improving child care services.

■ STRENGTHEN MENTOR TRAINING

The CECMTP program has taken a bold step in designing a teacher training program that extends opportunities for supervised teaching practica to a broad range of students in community-based child care programs by enlisting experienced and skilled teachers. Teacher training, like other forms of teaching, requires continued education and reflection. The CECMTP is structured to permit this ongoing education for mentors through the mentor class, meetings, and the annual Institute.

As designed, the mentoring class appears to be providing potential mentors with appropriate information to undertake a formal role in training adults. Courses, however, vary from campus to campus and by instructor. They should be evaluated by students each term, and adjustments in instructor assignments should be made if indicated. Furthermore, the CECMTP administration should periodically solicit information from mentoring class instructors regarding promising teaching strategies, and share these with all sites. Feedback from those students who take the course, but do not pursue a mentor role, should be solicited to ascertain the benefits of the course to this population.

Mentors' assessment of the mentor meetings were more variable than their assessment of the class. There appears to be some confusion about their purpose, and even whether the meetings are mandatory. The quality of instruction also appeared to vary more for the meetings than for the class. Since not all mentors are working with mentees at any given time, it may be that their expectations and needs with respect to the meetings vary

considerably. The CECMTP administration could help to clarify the expectations about the meetings by engaging college coordinators in discussion and issuing some written guidelines.

It may be helpful to convene a focus group of mentors and instructors from across the state during the annual Institute, to generate some concrete suggestions for strengthening this important program component.

Specifically, the CECMTP should explore differences in the training for mentees and lab students. It may be that the quality of instruction is affecting outcomes and/or it may be the content and continuity of the learning environments that impacts student behavior. Are mentors receiving sufficiently rigorous training in teacher instruction that they can confidently provide feedback to mentees? Is their mentoring assessed periodically to enable them to hone their skills in observation, feedback and modeling? The California New Teacher Project found, for example, that new mentors were more comfortable offering support to novice teachers, but found it difficult to provide critical feedback on actual teaching performance (California New Teacher Project, 1992). Helping mentors build their assessment skills may be indicated. Mentors should be assisted in assessing their training strategies, perhaps through a peer review or observation of other teacher trainers.

■ **EXTEND THE CONNECTION BETWEEN MENTORS AND POST-PRACTICA STUDENTS**

The greatest challenge for many students comes after their training practicum when they begin work or return to work in a child care center in the community, particularly if the center is poor in quality. Their need for support grows during this initial period. For some the answer may be to participate in another term of supervised teaching, but for many that is not a realistic option. It may be possible, however, to establish a mentee class (or post-practica class which includes lab students) for those who have completed their practica to meet periodically with mentors or other instructors, in order to process their experience on the job. Advanced mentors could perhaps conduct these mentee meetings. Mentees should also be assisted in finding employment in better-quality centers, to the extent that they exist in the community and are known to the college staff. A mentee support group would facilitate efforts to track students' career paths and could also help to identify future mentor candidates. In addition, it is unclear to what extent mentees and lab students receive different training in terms of the amount and the nature of content received from instructors; an effort should be made to align mentees' experience with that of lab students.

■ INCREASE THE PARTICIPATION OF BILINGUAL CAREGIVERS, FAMILY CHILD CARE PROVIDERS, AND TEACHERS SERVING LOW-INCOME CHILDREN IN A VARIETY OF SETTINGS

Site Diversity

Only one mentor in our sample and only three percent of all mentors currently work in family child care. In part, this reflects the fact that fewer family child care providers than center-based teachers have completed the CECMTP prerequisites of college-level training and a supervised practicum. In addition, not all participating colleges offer family child care as a supervised practicum experience. Given that family child care represents a growing proportion of the care in the field and a large number of linguistically diverse providers, efforts to build the family child care component should be encouraged. The resource and referral agency-based California Child Care Initiative, particularly its component to recruit and train Spanish-speaking providers, *El Comienzo*, may provide a pool of family child care providers in many communities who would be eligible for participation in the CECMTP.

Although mentors are currently employed in a wide range of center-based programs, priority goes to mentors working in centers that are partially or fully funded by the California Department of Education, Child Development Division; these are the highest-paid in our sample and have the longest tenure. CDD established this requirement to ensure that mentors are serving children of low-income families. Given that over two-thirds of such children who qualify for state- or federally-subsidized child care do not receive it because of inadequate funding (Child Care Law Center, 1993), there are many teachers and providers in the state who serve children of low-income families but do not work in CDD-funded programs, and who could benefit from the CECMTP. Indeed, this large pool of teachers is more likely to be earning the inadequate wages that fuel turnover and discourage professional development. The program guidelines should be revised to give priority to mentor applicants serving children of low-income families, whether in CDD-funded settings or others. This would ensure greater economic diversity in the CECMTP, and that its benefits were made available to a wider pool of teachers and providers without compromising the objective of targeting low-income families.

Linguistic Diversity

The CECMTP program has tremendous potential for increasing the number of teacher trainers who speak other languages in addition to English, and who can increase the pool of linguistically and ethnically diverse child care teachers and providers in the state. Targeted outreach to linguistically diverse programs, particularly those serving Asian-American communities, should be integrated into the CECMTP recruitment strategy. The California Child Care Resource and Referral Network could be called upon to provide assistance to the CECMTP. Not only should mentors with diverse language abilities be recruited to the program, but mentor teachers should also be encouraged and supported in

developing second-language skills, perhaps through the implementation of a bilingual differential, an approach used in some Head Start programs and public schools. Bi-literate mentors should be encouraged to translate important child development materials for the benefit of staff and parents as part of their professional development requirements for the mentor meetings. The Institute and other professional development activities provided for mentors by the CECMTP should regularly include information and strategies for addressing the linguistic, cultural and other special needs of children and students.

■ RECRUIT MORE AND BETTER PREPARED STUDENTS TO WORK WITH MENTORS

Selection

The selection process, while viewed as stringent by some, appears to be generating a group of mentors whose classrooms are of appropriately high quality. To maintain this level of quality, but to ensure that participants receive sufficient support to undergo the process, mentors could be used as "buddies" to offer feedback and moral support to potential applicants. It would be useful if sites routinely gathered feedback from applicants who are not selected as mentors, to ensure that these applicants' assessment of the process is not lost. A short evaluation form could be developed by the program administration at Chabot College to be used by all sites. Review of the application process in the mentor class should be continued to ensure that all those who embark on the process understand the expectations and basis of assessment. Selection committee members should be encouraged to conduct evaluation meetings with applicants in a timely manner to minimize their anxiety and to ensure that comments are given while observations are fresh.

Outreach

Efforts to publicize the program to potential student teachers should be increased. A video describing the CECMTP is currently in production. This resource features interviews from mentors and mentees, and demonstrates the program benefits to potential participants. The video and other information about the program should be disseminated each school term (whether semester or quarter), given that the student population, and often the instructional staff, continually change. A group of mentors and former mentees from each campus could be enlisted each term to make presentations in appropriate classes to publicize the program. Mentors' diversity and the nature of their classrooms, which are more likely to resemble students' current or future work environments, may draw them to the CECMTP.

Mentors desire not only a bigger pool of mentees, but mentees who are better prepared to begin student teaching. College coordinators share this desire, but typically do not make the placements; these are made by the practicum instructors. Those colleges that

have been able to recruit sufficient numbers of mentees and to work well with practicum instructors should be encouraged to share strategies with those having more difficulty.

Mentors need ongoing reminders about their role in the placement process. Although they do not decide who is in the mentee pool, they do have the "right of refusal" for any student sent to them. Students from different placement sources (e.g. from Regional Occupational Programs or different colleges, or coming with different course backgrounds) are sent to their placement with somewhat different expectations and to fulfill different course requirements. Thus, not all students will have the same level of preparation. Mentors should be encouraged by their monthly meeting instructors to develop a sense of which groups of students they can best serve.

■ ENSURE SUFFICIENT RELEASE TIME AND STIPEND LEVELS FOR MENTORS

Many mentors depend financially on the stipend, either to meet monthly expenses or to enable them to further their education. In a field that implicitly and explicitly expects teachers and providers to "volunteer" a certain portion of their services, the stipend heralds a shift in professional attitudes that validates the right of teachers to be paid for their skills and time. Many mentors appreciate the stipend for this very reason, even though they recognize that it does not adequately compensate them for their time.

Every effort should be made by the CECMTP to ensure that mentors receive adequate release time and/or compensation.⁴⁵ The CECMTP should convene groups of directors, college coordinators and mentors to explore strategies in achieving this goal. In the short term, increasing the pool of mentees for placements will increase the size of the stipend, albeit the work load also, of current mentors. The Mentor Institute could be structured to brainstorm strategies to enlist greater director and local community support. The possibility of increasing the stipend in accordance with increases in the cost of living should be considered.

⁴⁵ Although the issue was not explored directly in this evaluation, a number of comments by mentors suggest that coordinators of large programs are somewhat overloaded with work. The coordinator role should be reviewed with respect to responsibilities, release time from other duties, and compensation, particularly in relation to program size.

■ DOCUMENT TRAINING OUTCOMES

These findings strongly call for further research about long-term training outcomes. The CECMTP program should be supported to continue to collect longitudinal outcome data for students and to track the career paths of mentees and mentors. Interested funders, researchers and policy makers should also convene a meeting to determine how the many questions raised by this study can be further explored. For example, this study contributes to our understanding of the impact of training on teacher behavior, but also suggests that certain types of training may influence particular aspects of teacher behavior.

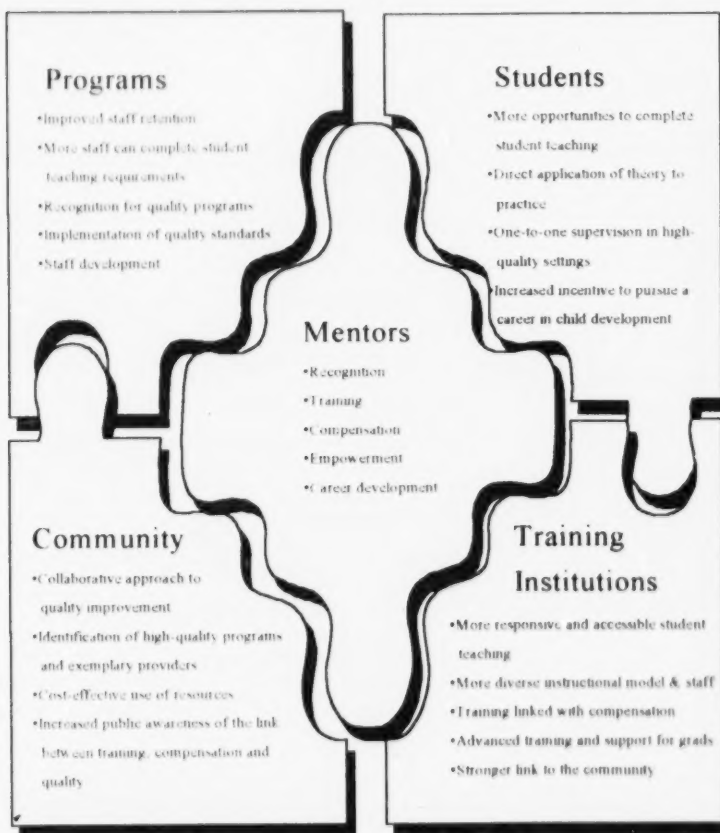
■ INCREASE EFFORTS TO UPGRADE CHILD CARE QUALITY

The poor quality of many centers which employ California early childhood education students poses an enormous threat to impressive efforts made by the CECMTP and other college training programs. A greater investment in initiatives to improve the quality of services emerges from this and other recent studies of child care (Cost, Quality and Child Care Outcomes Team, 1995; Whitebook, et al., 1990). Advocates for early care and education must continue to draw attention to the importance of quality child care in helping parents to enter and stay in the work force and in helping children develop their potential in early childhood environments. The efforts of the CECMTP can contribute to these efforts by supporting teachers to lead the call for greater societal investment in good services for children.



The CECMTP is a truly collaborative effort among child care programs, community stakeholders, experienced and well-trained teachers and providers, students and training institutions to build and stabilize the child care work force--and thereby to improve services to children and families. Its success depends on a delicate balance of responsibilities between each party. The CECMTP has laid a sound foundation, supported by private foundations and federal funds, which is enabling these players to work together in helping early childhood teachers and providers extend their professional development and their commitment to their chosen field.

Improving Child Care - How the pieces fit together



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APPENDIX

Figure A-1 - Survey Measures Used With Mentor Teachers

PURPOSE	SOURCE	DESCRIPTION
Mentor Background		
Demographic	Whitebook, Howes & Phillips, 1990	Sex, age, ethnicity, marital status, number of children, household income, languages spoken.
Education, training	⌈	Highest level of formal education and highest level of ECE training completed; practicum experience; in-service training.
Professional experience	⌈	Tenure at center, years of experience in the child care field, professional affiliation, assessment of career opportunities, suggestions for improving child care retention.
Mentor's Work Environment		
Wages, benefits, working conditions	Whitebook, Howes & Phillips, 1990	Professional job title, hourly wages, availability of benefits (e.g., health care, paid vacation), working conditions (e.g., paid breaks, formal grievance procedure).
Children cared for	Chang & Sakai, 1993.	Ethnicity, English language proficiency, languages spoken, age range.
Staff	Chang & Sakai, 1993	Languages spoken by other staff members in classroom.

continued

PURPOSE	SOURCE	DESCRIPTION
Early Childhood Mentor Teacher Program		
Recruitment and selection	Developed for assessment	Mentor's assessment of program application and selection process.
Mentor classes	↓	Mentor's assessment of mentor teacher course (e.g., topics covered).
Supervising students	↓	Working with mentees including hours of supervision, match between mentors and mentees.
Stipend	↓	Views on stipend (e.g., necessity of stipend).
Professional roles and career goals	↓	Impact of program on mentor's self image; mentor's role in advocating for higher quality child care, better compensation, and increased training.
Structural Quality		
Group size	Developed for assessment	Number of children in classroom as reported by mentor teacher.

Figure A-2 - Observational and Survey Measures Used With Lab Students and Community Teachers

PURPOSE	SOURCE	DESCRIPTION
Teacher Behavior		
Arnett Scale of Teacher Sensitivity	Arnett, 1989	Observational measure of three aspects of teacher/child relationship: <i>sensitivity</i> (ten items including warm, attentive, engaged); <i>harshness</i> (nine items including critical, threatens children, punitive); <i>detachment</i> (four items including low levels of interaction, interest, supervision).
Early Childhood Teacher Behavior Checklist	Briggs, 1987	Observational measure focusing on teacher behaviors in five areas: <i>enhancing cognitive development</i> (12 items including: asked open ended questions, encouraged pretend play and imagination, introduced new vocabulary in conversations); <i>enhancing emotional health and self-concept</i> (12 items including: used children's names when talking to them, praised children for independence in making decisions, fostered children's sense of pride in their accomplishments); <i>enhancing social competence</i> (ten items including: thanked children for helping, encouraged children to take turns, encouraged children to listen to one another); <i>enhancing physical competence</i> (11 items including: encouraged children to use good health and sanitation, showed concern for children's physical comfort, challenged children to try, practice or improve gross motor skills) <i>management and communication skills</i> (18 items including: usually positioned to see most of the children at once, showed pleasure by laughing or smiling while interacting with children and staff, responded quickly to behavior or problems)

continued

PURPOSE	SOURCE	DESCRIPTION
Classroom Assessment		
Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS)	Harms and Clifford, 1980	Observational measure focusing on the areas of caregiving practice: space and furnishings, basic needs, language and reasoning, learning activities, social development, and adult needs (33 items).
Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS)	Harms, Cryer, & Clifford, 1980	Observational measure (outlined in ECERS)
Structural Quality		
Group size		Average number of children present at the beginning and end of observation period.
Ratio		Observed number of children for each adult present who is providing care.
Background		
Demographic	Whitebook, Howes & Phillips, 1990	Sex, age, ethnicity, marital status, family structure (e.g., number of children).
Education, training	↓	Highest level of formal education and highest level of ECE training completed.
Professional experience	↓	Years of experience in the child care field.

continued

PURPOSE	SOURCE	DESCRIPTION
Professional identification	Whitebook, et al., 1990	Professional job title, hourly wages. Views of child care work as a long-term career or a temporary job; opportunities for job advancement and job options.
Work environment Field placement and jobs	↓	Age range of children cared for. Satisfaction with policies, procedures, director and co-worker relations. Length of practicum (for students only).
Assessment of training practica (information from lab and mentor students only).	Developed for assessment.	Promotion and support for students regarding practicum options. Student satisfaction with practicum. Students' ratings of practicum classes, supervisors, and their match with the supervisor. Students' views of practicum in comparison to other types of training. Influence of practicum on child care career.

PLAN OF ANALYSIS

We used analysis of variance and covariance to compare the observational and survey data collected from students (mentor program and lab) and community teachers. Scheffe tests were used for all post-hoc comparisons of groups. All reported findings are significant at the .05 level or better. Data are analyzed separately for Time 1 observations and the follow-up observations. In addition, repeated-measures analyses of variance and covariance were used to examine the change in program quality and teacher behaviors from their first to second observations. Interobserver reliability across all items was $r = .87$.

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